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ABSTRACT

This teacher's guide is based on the exhibition, "Visible Traces: Rare Books and Special Collections from the National Library of China," a collaborative effort of the Queens Borough Public Library and the National Library of China; it links rare treasures from the National Library of China to curriculum standards. The following themes are explored in this guide: "Traces of Boundaries: Mapping One's Place in the World"; "Traces of Ideas: Communicating through Writing and Technology"; "Traces of Belief: Making Values Tangible through Word and Image"; "Traces of Identity: Reflecting Diversity through Language and Writing"; and "Traces of the Self: Expressing Individuality through Poetry and Calligraphy." Each theme-based chapter consists of an introduction, one or two background essays, and two or three classroom activities. The chapters' introductions focus on the objects from the exhibition, while the essays explain the larger historical context relating to the "Visible Traces" objects and are intended for the teacher. The classroom activities are organized by educational levels, with variations suggested for adaptation to a particular grade. Includes reproducible handouts. (BT)

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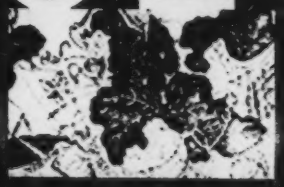
# VISIBLE TRACES



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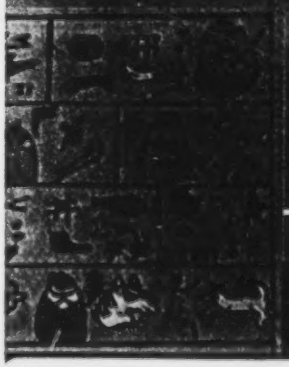

## Teacher's Guide

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# *Visible Traces* Teacher's Guide

The *Visible Traces* Classroom Kit, including poster and Teacher's Guide, is produced by the Asia Society in collaboration with the Queens Borough Public Library, with funds provided through the Queens Library Foundation. The exhibition on which these materials are based, *Visible Traces: Rare Books and Special Collections from the National Library of China*, is a collaborative effort of the Queens Borough Public Library and the National Library of China. A major part of the *Visible Traces* exhibition is funded by grants from The Henry Luce Foundation and The E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation. Additional support for the exhibition was provided by the Himalaya Foundation and the Decentralization Program, a regrant program of the New York State Council on the Arts, administered by the Queens Council on the Arts.

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# Preface and Acknowledgements

We live in an age defined by connections. The possibilities for communication, interaction, and exchange increase daily. *Visible Traces: Rare Books and Special Collections from the National Library of China* is both a product of, as well as an important participant in such connections. The exhibition began as a collaboration between the Queens Borough Public Library in New York and the National Library of China in Beijing to bring rare books, maps and rubbings to the American public. The Queens Borough Public Library then invited the Asia Society's Education Division to develop teaching materials that would introduce these important objects and images to U.S. classrooms as well as link them to various curriculum standards, notably Social Studies, Geography, Language Arts, and Visual Arts.

*Visible Traces* has forged connections across space and cultures, bringing people from China and the United States together, yet it also connects the present to the past. Oracle bones dating to the second millennium B.C.E., a Buddhist sutra from the twelfth century, and a Naxi creation myth written in pictographic script from 1950 preserve the thoughts and voices of the past and make them tangible. In examining them, we better understand the history of human communication, interaction, and exchange in addition to our own place in this continuum.

There are many organizations and individuals without whom the *Visible Traces* Classroom Kits and Web site would not have been possible. First, we wish to thank the Queens Library Gallery and particularly Mindy Krazmien, Exhibition Manager, for initiating our involvement and ensuring that we received all essential materials from the Queens Borough Public Library and the National Library of China. The Queens Library Foundation and its Executive Director, Stanley Gornish, raised the funds for the production of the Classroom Kits and Web site. Philip K. Hu, who compiled and edited the *Visible Traces* exhibition catalogue, shared his extensive research with us. We also want to thank the National Library of China for inviting U.S. classrooms to learn about the important objects in its collection and for offering its expertise in the review of the materials we developed.

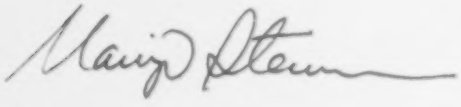
The content of the kits was a collaborative effort among many individuals. We wish to thank Jean Johnson of New York University for writing the introductions to each chapter, Joan Arno of George Washington High School in Philadelphia, Joan Barnatt of the Cape Cod Lighthouse Charter

School, Nancy-Jo Hereford, and Kelly Long of the Colorado State University for contributing to and developing the classroom activities; and Keith Dede of the University of Washington, Geoff Foy of the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, Charles Lachman of the University of Oregon, Irene S. Leung of the University of Michigan, Robert McColl of the University of Kansas, Jerry Norman of the University of Washington, and Kelly Long for the background essays. Stephen Durrant of the University of Oregon kindly translated the Wang Wei poem in chapter five.

Thanks also go to the Society's Education Division staff members: Elisa Holland, Kerrie Lorenzo, Grace Norman, Roberta Salvador, and Homer Williams as well as Nancy Blume, Education Programs Coordinator for the Society's Cultural Programs Division, for their general assistance and helpful advice. Heather Clydesdale's outstanding work on the *Visible Traces* project deserves special mention. Heather spearheaded this effort, leading in the overall development of the project. This project would not be what it is without her academic insight, programming know-how, and follow-through.

We also wish to thank Storehouse Co. for designing the look and layout of the classroom kits. Pat Emerson also deserves mention for her tireless copyediting. And, we would like to acknowledge the generosity of the Stanford Program on International and Cross-Cultural Education (SPICE), a program of the Institute for International Studies, Stanford University, for allowing us to reprint their Pinyin Pronunciation guide and to adapt their Order in Language handout. Thanks also to Digital Wisdom for allowing us to adapt their terrain maps.

Finally, we wish to recognize the dynamic team at Vanguard Media, particularly Michael Pinto and Navera Durrani. Their creativity and technology expertise were indispensable in launching *Visible Traces* on the Web via the Society's AskAsia Web site at <www.askasia.org>, where it is available worldwide and where it will continue to form cross-cultural connections as well as links between the past and the present.



Namji Kim Steinemann
*Vice President*
*Education Division*

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# Introduction to Teachers: Using Visible Traces in Your Classroom

This *Visible Traces* Classroom Kit links rare treasures from the National Library of China to various curriculum standards. It includes a poster featuring selected works from the *Visible Traces* exhibition and this Teacher's Guide. The latter is divided into five chapters, each exploring a distinct theme. They are called *Mapping One's Place in the World, Communicating Through Writing and Technology, Making Values Tangible Through Word and Image, Reflecting Diversity Through Language and Writing,* and *Expressing Individuality Through Poetry and Calligraphy.* Each chapter consists of an introduction, one or two background essays, and two or three classroom activities.

The introductions focus on the objects from the *Visible Traces* exhibition. These introductory pages can be photocopied and distributed to your class for discussion, or you may choose to use the visuals in the *Visible Traces* poster. The essays explain the larger historical context relating to the *Visible Traces* objects and are intended for your own background reading, though you may wish to give these to older students as reading assignments.

The classroom activities in each chapter are tiered for different educational levels, with variations suggested if you wish to adjust the lesson for a particular grade. Each activity involves examining one of the *Visible Traces* objects and then investigating the larger historical, cultural, analytical, or artistic issues it embodies. Handouts for activities can be found directly following the activity they support. All activities are designed to support curriculum standards.

The *Visible Traces* exhibition, Classroom Kits, and interactive features are available on the World Wide Web. On AskAsia, the Asia Society's award-winning K–12 Web site <www.askasia.org> you will find the entire *Visible Traces* exhibition, which was organized by the Queens Library Gallery of New York and the National Library of China, Beijing. The *Visible Traces* Classroom Kits, including downloadable lesson plans and new interactive features for students, are also on AskAsia. For more information about locations and dates of the *Visible Traces* exhibition and the exhibition catalogue, please go to the Queens Library Gallery homepage <www.queenslibrary.org/gallery>.

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# Map of China

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# Chronology

| | |
|---|---|
| Neolithic period | ca. 7000–ca. 2000 B.C.E. |
| Xia dynasty (protohistoric) | ca. 2100–ca. 1600 B.C.E. |
| Shang dynasty | ca. 1600–ca. 1100 B.C.E. |
| Zhou dynasty | ca. 1100–256 B.C.E. |
| Western Zhou | ca. 1100–771 B.C.E. |
| Eastern Zhou | 770–256 B.C.E. |
| Spring and Autumn period | 770–476 B.C.E. |
| Warring States period | 475–221 B.C.E. |
| Qin dynasty | 221–207 B.C.E. |
| Han dynasty | 206 B.C.E.–220 C.E. |
| Period of disunity | 220–589 |
| Sui dynasty | 589–618 |
| Tang dynasty | 618–907 |
| Five dynasties | 907–960 |
| Liao dynasty | 916–1125 |
| Song dynasty | 960–1279 |
| Northern Song | 960–1127 |
| Southern Song | 1127–1279 |
| Jin dynasty | 1115–1234 |
| Yuan dynasty | 1279–1368 |
| Ming dynasty | 1368–1644 |
| Qing dynasty | 1644–1911 |
| Republic of China | 1911–1949 |
| People's Republic of China | 1949–present |

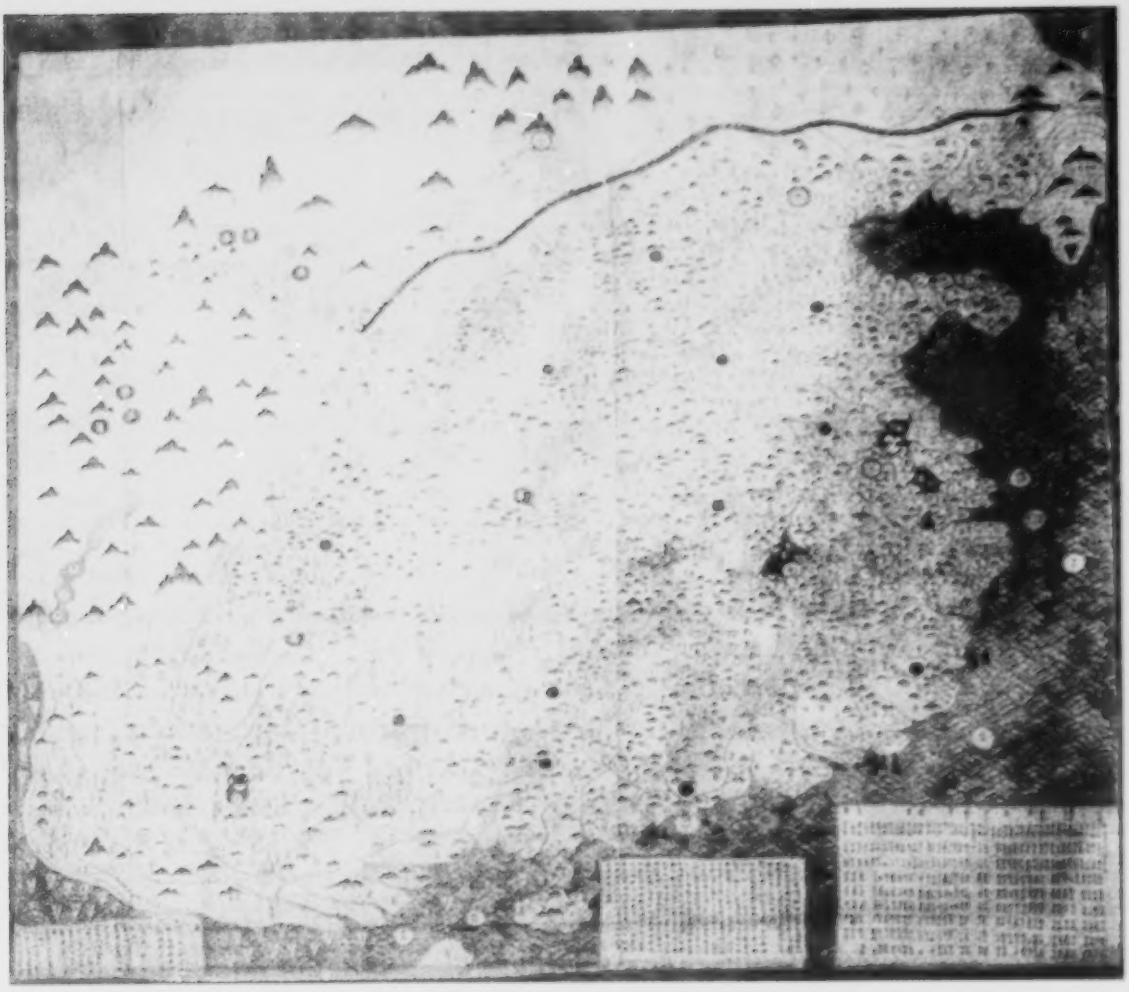
*Note: Although the Sui dynasty was declared in 581, China was not unified by conquest until 589.*

# Theme 1 Traces of Boundaries: Mapping One's Place in the World

How many different uses can you think of for maps? We use road maps to find our way to other places. Physical maps show different landforms and elevations as well as the location of rivers and other bodies of water. Historic maps help us understand political boundaries and the movement of people, goods, and ideas. Military leaders need maps as they plan their campaigns, and tourists need maps in order to figure out interesting places to visit. Many maps show both natural and man-made features. They often reflect values of the people who create them and define their place in the world.

Maps, such as the one from the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) were used for military and political purposes and show how China viewed itself in relation to the rest of the world. Many maps depict smaller territories. In China ownership of a map indicated sovereignty over the land it depicted. In fact, if there was a dispute over territory, the possessor of the map was correct.

***Traces of Boundaries*** uses the Ming map to introduce students to the diversity of China's natural and man-made features, as well as the relative population of its various areas. Students can identify various features on the map and infer possible reasons for the differences in settlement patterns. The background essay, **"Understanding the Geography of China: An Assemblage of Pieces,"** offers information about China's actual and possible interactions between geography and lifestyle. Two lessons follow. Using the Chinese map as a model, the first activity, **Mapping Perceptions,** asks students to identify a map's key elements, such as kinds of features, symbols of man-made objects, scale, and orientation and then to apply what they have learned by creating a map of their own neighborhood. The second activity, **Building an Empire,** invites students to study specific information about China's regional differences by creating a map of the nation, region by region.



**Map of Imperial Territories**
Originally drawn during the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), Jiaqing period (1522–1566), dated 1526; postscript by Yang Ziqi (1458–1513).
Modern copy of original made in 1983.
Hanging scroll, ink, color, and white pigment on two widths of silk stitched together, 160.2 x 182.6 cm.

## Introductory Questions

- What natural features are depicted on this map?
- What man-made features are depicted?
- What symbols are used? What might different symbols stand for?
- By studying this map, can you determine what defines China's borders?
- Which are natural, which are man-made?
- Which parts of the imperial territories in this map seem to be most densely populated?
- Which parts are most sparsely populated?
- What might be the reasons for certain places being less populated than others?
- Who might have used this map and for what purpose?

Background Essay

# Understanding the Geography of China: An Assemblage of Pieces

Robert W. McColl

Understanding the interaction between a natural environment and various human and cultural patterns is an essential aspect of geography. To fully appreciate China's broad geographic and cultural diversity, one needs to identify general characteristics that act as guidelines. The technical term used to describe distinctive areas is "homogeneous regions." Today "fingerprint" carries the same idea, namely some thing or place that is distinctive. Just as fingers share general characteristics, each has a unique "print" or pattern. This same principle can be used to facilitate understanding complex cultures and societies, such as those in China.

*A distinct geographic print might include the following variables:*
physical and environmental features, such as climates, soils, topography, and location;
historic patterns and their relationship to the natural environment;
the economic activities and resources that define the area today.

An aid to creating an understanding of the nature of such fingerprints would be tables showing each region's common (yet distinctive) characteristics. An important characteristic is vernacular housing (houses built without architects and that reflect local materials and conditions), but today many people live in apartment buildings, especially in urban areas. Social organization, transportation, and food are other important aspects of a fingerprint.

**The North China Plain**

*Physical characteristics:* As its name indicates, this is an area of gently rolling topography. It is subject to flooding, and water often stands in large pools and "lakes," as there is no place for drainage. This creates marshes and shallow, reed-filled lakes, which are good for thatching and weaving as well as migratory birds, fish, and snails. Winter and summer tempatures can be extreme, and dust storms are common. Highly variable weather means good harvests for only three out of every five years.

*History:* The North China Plain was one of the cradles of Chinese civi-

lization. China's earliest agricultural societies as well as dynasties formed there. People traditionally lived in dispersed communities rather than nucleated settlements because food and water were available everywhere. The primary need to nucleate was as a defense against invaders and raiders. The earliest archaeological sites of "cities" are at the foot of the Taihang Mountains, where there are minerals as well as manageable water resources for all seasons.

*Economic activities and resources today:* Even today the North China Plain is a land of dispersed agricultural settlements. There is little or no industry other than distinctive indigenous handicrafts. Fresh water must come from wells that often are salty because of poor drainage. The lack of topographic relief means seasonal winds are strong and often destructive. The result is that many areas have planted windbreaks to protect the soil of the fields from erosion. Life on the North China Plain is one of self-sufficiency and subsistence. Wheat, cotton, tobacco, peanuts, persimmons, and other seasonal fruits and vegetables are grown there.

*Housing:* mud-based, single-story structures with flat roofs
*Social organization:* villages and clans
*Transportation:* walking, wheelbarrows, bicycles, cars
*Food staples:* wheat-based foods

**The Loess Plateau**

*Physical characteristics:* The overwhelming distinctive characteristic of the Loess Plateau is the wind-blown alluvium (dust) that has accumulated to depths of over 1,000 meters (3,300 feet) in some places and is known as loess. While loess is rich in calcium and thus fertile, the overall aridity of the region coupled with the fact that loess does not hold water makes traditional methods of irrigation and farming useless. Environmental conditions, including highly variable rainfall (when it does occur), means that farmers seldom expect to harvest more than two crops every three years.

*History:* Two cultural patterns resulted from the physical environment and location of the Loess Plateau. One was human poverty and isolated communities; the other a dependency upon trade with nomadic peoples and the empires beyond the Great Wall. Economically the Loess Plateau has been dominated by trade and commercial cities that have flourished and died as routes and the direction of trade have shifted. It has never been a strong food-producing region.

*Economic activities and resources today:* As in the past, key cities in the Loess Plateau are those that facilitate trade and transport to and from eastern China and the North China Plain. Cities such as Xi'an and Lanzhou are trade hubs stemming from a reinvigorated economy in Xinjiang and the for-

mer Soviet countries of central Asia. Today, however, oil has replaced silk as the major economic commodity. Oil is a major resource in Gansu, Xinjiang, and the contiguous country of Kazakhstan.

*Housing:* caves carved into the loess cliffs and mud-brick houses in rural areas, apartments in urban areas

*Social organization:* nuclear families

*Transportation:* walking, mule, and horse in rural areas; cars, buses, and bicycles in urban areas

*Food staples:* wheat-noodles and sour cabbage

**The Southeast Coast and Shanghai**

*Physical characteristics:* This region shares the entire Yangzi Valley's dominant characteristics of water, wetlands, and hot and humid summers. However, the influence of the Pacific Ocean as well as access thereto make the area distinctive. The ocean's warm current creates milder winter temperatures than in the interior. In addition the nearby mountains (Huangshan and Wuyi) are favorable for crops other than aquaculture (rice, shrimp, ducks, and so on), which is prominent in the lowlands. Mild climates and abundant rainfall mean farmers in this area generally expect to obtain three or more crops every year. Some form of food, whether from land or sea, is always abundant and in surplus.

*History:* This was the first region to feel the impact of the West through the Opium War and "Treaty Ports" of the eighteenth century. It has had the greatest number of Christian missionaries, Chinese Christians, and Christian churches in China. Like so many of China's distinct physical environments, it is dominated by ethnic peoples not fully identifiable as "Han," who speak distinct languages and often have closer ties to Chinese overseas.

*Economic activities and resources today:* Shanghai is the major city of this region. Located at the mouth of the Yangzi, it is a thriving port and a center for steel, telecommunications, automobiles, power production equipment, petrochemicals and electric appliances. Having a strong service industry, the city is also focused on finance and insurance, commerce, real estate, tourism, and information. On the coast fishing and shipping are important industries. Other cities along the coast also have been designated "special economic zones." In the interior regions rice is an important cash crop, except in the mountainous areas, where fishing and forestry take place. Other specialty crops, such as tea and citrus fruits, are grown, but the coast is subject to typhoons.

*Housing:* plaster or brick to offset rain in rural areas, apartment buildings in urban areas

*Social organization:* class, family, or business compounds
*Transportation:* boats and ships on rivers and canals, cars, buses, and bicycles
*Food staples:* rice, seafood, and tropical fruits

**The Yangzi Valley**

*Physical characteristics:* Separated from other regions by mountains and extensive wetlands is the Yangzi (Yangtze or Changjiang—"long river" ); its tributaries and lakes are the focus of life and economics in the valley. Summers tend to be hot, humid, and rainy along the river, while winters are brief but cold.

*History:* The Yangzi Valley has traditionally been an important food producer. The river has been the center of economic life, bringing trade and influences from distant places. During the twentieth century, initiatives to dam the Yangzi have brought about drastic changes in the landscape, economy, and lives of the people living in the Yangzi Valley, forcing many to relocate.

*Economic activities and resources today:* Fishing and boat commerce dominate life and culture. Cities, such as Chongqing (in Sichuan province), Wuhan, and Nanjiang, are driven by economies tied to water-borne transportation and commerce—not agriculture or even food processing. Major manufacturing centers exist along the river because it is a cheap means of transport. There are large numbers of people who spend their entire lives on small or medium boats, making a living moving goods and people via the numerous lakes, canals, and rivers of the entire Yangzi valley.

*Housing:* white-plastered, multistoried houses with black tiled roofs, houseboats, apartments in cities
*Social organization:* commercial/trade "families"
*Transportation:* river and canal boats, trucks, cars, bicycles in cities
*Food staples:* rice and fish

**The Sichuan Basin**

*Physical characteristics:* The defining physical feature of this region is the large Sichuan Basin, which is divided into two parts, Chengdu and Chongqing. High and difficult mountains surround the basin. Primary access to eastern China is via the Yangzi River, which traverses the famous Three Gorges. This geographic setting creates a mild climate. Extremely fertile soils are largely derived from old lake sediments. Farmers not only can count on several crops every year, they can depend on a diversity of food crops as well as specialties.

*History:* It is often said that "Sichuan in the first province to declare

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independence and the last to be reunited after there is peace." Located in a highly protected, productive setting and adjacent to virtually every major region of historic China, Sichuan is capable of being wholly independent from the rest of China. Yet, control of Sichuan and its agricultural riches provided access to every other major political and economic realm, making it the target of many outside *warlords* and emperors.

*Warlords* Supreme military commanders that exercise civil power by force usually in a limited area.

*Economic activities and resources today:* Sichuan has always been known for its tea, silk, flowers, medicinal herbs, and diverse wildlife, including pandas, deer, and tigers. These resources remain a major staple of its modern economy as do the raising of sheep, pork, and grain. Tourism is also crucial to Sichuan's economy. Popular tourist sites include the Thousand- Buddha Cliff, Qingcheng Mountain, the Bamboo Forest, the Corridor of Cypresses, Woolong Nature Reserve (for panda conservation), and Xiling National Forest Park. The Yangzi River is a thoroughfare of trade, meaning that Sichuan is rapidly changing with the influx of foreign investors and developers.

*Housing:* timber, stone, or straw houses in rural areas; large apartment buildings in the cities

*Social organization:* village clusters in rural areas

*Transportation:* walking, mule, horses, in the mountains; bicycles and cars on the plains, boats on rivers

*Food staples:* varied

**Southwest Uplands**

*Physical characteristics:* Nothing so dominates and defines southwest China as its rugged, highly eroded topography. Because it is close to the tropical cyclones of the Bay of Bengal and the South China Sea it has abundant rainfall (often causing erosion or denuded slopes). This location and terrain create numerous distinctive local "niches" that often are self-sufficient, which in turn support an abundance of distinct ethnic groups, many of which also live in the neighboring countries of Laos, Vietnam, Burma, and even Thailand.

*History:* This region first came into the Chinese sphere during the Mongol Yuan dynasty (1279–1368). Its history reflects both its rugged topography as well as its proximity to the modern countries and peoples of southeast Asia, such as Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, and Myanmar (Burma). Trade between these countries and the Southwest Uplands often has been illegal and generally consisted of small items of great value, such as jade or opium.

*Economic activities and resources today:* Land for grazing and the cultiva-

tion of rice, winter wheat, tea, and beans is available in the region. The tropical plateau along the border of Vietnam and Laos is ideal for cultivating rubber and bananas. The mining of tin, another major industry of this region, is the only distinctive economy that is both traditional and modern. More valuable, however, has been the cultivation and export of opium, an activity developed as a result of Britain's Opium War with China.

*Housing:* caves carved into the loess cliffs and mud-brick houses in rural areas; apartments in urban areas

*Social organization:* nuclear families

*Transportation:* walking, mule, and horse in rural areas

*Food staples:* vegetables, rice, ducks, and geese

**Xinjiang**

*Physical characteristics:* China's largest province is a landscape of deserts, mountains, and oases. Most of the region is dominated by the Tarim Basin, which is filled mostly by the formidable Taklamakan Desert and rimmed by high mountains—the Kunlun Shan to the south, the Karakorum to the west, and the Tian Shan to the north. The alpine beauty of the Tian Shan separates the Tarim Basin from the smaller Junggar Basin, which is characterized by more moisture and grass.

*History:* The inhabitants of the Junggar Basin have a long association with various Mongol peoples, but they are more pastoral than nomadic. Located between the cultural empires of China in the east and central Asia in the west, Xinjiang was an important historic link along the Silk Roads. The peoples living along oases around the rim of the Tarim Basin had closer ties to Persia and the Islamic influences of the Middle East. The Uighurs, Xinjiang's largest minority, are predominantly Moslem and Turkic in ethnicity and language. Their economic history is more closely linked to the mercantile cities and trade of the ancient Silk Road than to the irrigation practices of eastern China. The trade and traffic along this famous route integrated people and cultures and introduced distinctive styles of music and musical instruments, especially the *suona* and pipa, or Chinese-style lute. The beginning of the twentieth century found the British, Germans, American, Japanese, and Russians vying for control of this strategically important location.

*Economic activities and resources today:* Xinjiang is rich in oil. The Taklamakan is too barren for agriculture but is often used as a nuclear test site. Despite the fact that the railroad does not extend very far west into the province, tourism is gaining in this remote region of spectacular scenery with a wealth of archaeological treasures, including Buddhist cave temples,

ruined cities and fortresses, petrogylphs, and 4,000-year-old mummies.

*Housing:* earth/adobe houses, two-storied with flat roofs. Nomads live in tents, while apartments are common in urban areas. Mosques and some residential architecture have Central Asian or Persian-style influences.

*Social organization:* nuclear families in urban areas; groups of families for nomads

*Transportation:* long-distance trucks and buses in rural areas; bicycles within cities. Mules are used in cities, and horses and camels in rural areas.

*Food staples:* wheat noodles, flat wheat bread (*nan*), and mutton

**Northeast (Manchuria)**

*Physical characteristics:* The dominant physical feature of this region is its winter cold and ice. Equally distinctive and important are its two extensive wetlands—the northernmost associated with the Songari River and the southern with the Liao River. Nevertheless, its basic natural resources of iron ore and coal have made it economically vital to the rest of China.

*History:* The Manchus invaded China in the seventeenth century, establishing the Qing dynasty in 1644. The lands of Manchuria, however, were not open to Han settlement until the dynasty's end in 1911. Most Chinese migrants worked in existing industry and on large commercial farms producing mostly soybeans and corn.

*Economic activities and resources today:* Manchuria is China's most important region for heavy industry. Coal and iron mining are also central to the region's economy, and ginseng, soybeans, and timber are major products.

*Housing:* caves carved into the loess cliffs and mud-brick houses in rural areas; apartments in urban areas. Some Russian influence in the architecture.

*Social organization:* nuclear families

*Transportation:* walking, mule, and horse in rural areas

*Food staples:* meat and soybean curds

**Qinghai and the Tibetan Plateau**

*Physical characteristics:* Altitude, which can average 3962.4 meters (13,000 feet), best defines the physical environment of the Qinghai-Tibetan plateau. Except in the bright sunlight, it always is very cold. Located mostly in the rain shadow of the Himalayas, the region is arid to semi-arid. This means that despite a latitude close to the Tropic of Cancer, Qinghai and Tibet are nontropical for the most part. Still, there are areas along its southern and western boundaries, where rhododendron and banana trees grow in the shadow of active glaciers. This is attributable to the heavy rainfall and temperatures associated with the Indian monsoon.

*Animal husbandry* Branch of agriculture concerned with raising domestic animals, like cows or lambs.

*History:* Because of the region's adjacence to India and central Asia, the people, economies, and even religion of Qinghai and Tibet have seldom been affected by those of China in the east. Even Mongolia had closer cultural links to this region than did China proper. *Animal husbandry* and nomadism are traditional ways of life. Until the 1950s, one out of every five Tibetans was a Buddhist nun or monk. Monasteries have been at the center of society since at least the eighth century.

*Economic activities and resources today:* Qinghai and Tibet remain remote and largely unpopulated. Where conditions permit, the Chinese have encouraged the westward migration of farmers from overpopulated areas to the east. Animals continue to be raised, and wool weavings are another important product. Goods are also produced from indigenous gold and turquoise.

*Housing:* nomads live in yak-felt tents. Homes are two stories with inward-slanting mud, earthen brick, or stone walls and earthen floors.

*Social organization:* monasteries play a role in Buddhist communities, mosques in Islamic ones. Nomads gather in family clusters.

*Transportation:* walking, caravans, trucks and buses, horses in rural areas; bicycles and cars in urban areas

*Food staples:* yak butter, tea, barley, vegetables, yak, or lamb

**Tying It All Together: From Empire to State**

Clearly, to create political "China," it is still important to tie these different regions together. Transportation remains the most crucial factor. As the means of tying the country and its regions together proceeded, a common written language and shared cultural values evolved. The written language and the bureaucratic class that used it were pivotal in creating a net of a shared experience and cultural values that bonded the disparate geographies and spoken languages of China and linked the past to the present.

Because the origins of China's empire lay in its interior, imperial highways were initially the most important features of the transportation system. The network of imperial highways was first established by Qin Shihuangdi (258–210 B.C.E.), who united the kingdoms of China in 221 B.C.E. He also initiated the construction of a canal system. By the Song dynasty (960–1279 C.E.), canals linked the lower Yangzi Valley and regions south of it to the North China Plain. Natural lakes and rivers also helped unify the Chinese Empire, with the Yangzi and its tributaries tying together coastal and interior regions. Except in Qinghai and the Tibetan Plateau and Xinjiang, an extensive rail system links China and is the most common form of long-distance travel.

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One cannot underestimate the importance of television and telephones as well as the airlines in promoting the Chinese view of themselves as one people and culture. Their value in political control was demonstrated in June 1997 when the reunification of Hong Kong became an ethnic rallying point. The images and issues were simultaneously shared with Han Chinese throughout the People's Republic as well as in other parts of the world. The Internet is gaining popularity, though chiefly in urban areas. However, the central government's inability to monitor and control such communication poses some challenges.

**Political Organization**

Political organization has been as important in creating a common culture. No empire or state can exist without both cooperation and means of enforcing order among disparate geographic areas and peoples. This was the primary achievement of Qin Shihuangdi. This first emperor defined the empire's borders within central Asia and established common laws for everyone within every geographic sector of the country. In modern times the reunification of China's geographic regions (often historically independent kingdoms or "states" ) under a common Communist ideology was a major achievement of the Chinese Communists and the People's Liberation Army.

Political organization in China has been successful in part because it recognizes the distinctiveness of various geographic areas. Large cities, such as Shanghai, Beijing, Tianjin, Chongqing, and Hong Kong, have special political status. Likewise, key economic cities have been created and accorded such status to provide controlled access to minor economics and world trade. Finally geographic areas dominated by non-Han cultures and peoples, such as Xinjiang, Ningxia, Tibet, Inner Mongolia, and Guangxi, have been declared (at least on paper) "Autonomous Regions." Even at the local level, special status is commonly given to cities or even geographic areas that require it to maintain political peace and order—a type of geopolitical "gerrymandering."

Given that the Chinese have long recognized their geographic distinctions, it seems only reasonable that we should teach about China with the same awareness and sensitivity to diversity.

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**Selected sources and suggested further readings:**

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# Activity 1.1 Mapping Perceptions

**Performance Objectives** In creating their own maps, as well as analyzing the ***Map of Imperial Territories,*** students will identify key elements of a map (scale, kinds of features, symbols, orientation), functions that influence its creation, and how it serves as a resource.

**Grade Level** 3–5

**Essential Questions** What can maps tell us about how its maker perceives his or her place in the world?
What does a Ming dynasty map tell us about how the Chinese at that time saw their country in relation to the rest of the world?

**Standards**

**Social Studies**

*World History*

• Studying about different world cultures and civilizations

*Geography*

• Drawing maps and diagrams that represent places, physical features, and objects
• Identifying and comparing a region's physical, human, and cultural characteristics
• Asking questions about where places are located, why they are located where they are, what is important about their locations, and how their
• locations are related to those of other people and places
• Gathering and organizing geographic information from a variety of sources and displaying it in a number of ways

**Language Arts**

*Language for Information and Understanding*

• Gathering and interpreting information independently from charts, graphs, maps, and diagrams
• Reflecting on what is heard or read and describing other relevant ideas and experiences

**Time Required** One class period for drawing maps; one class period for discussion, comparisons, and written analysis

**Materials** Photocopies of the ***Map of Imperial Territories*** and **Introductory Questions** from the beginning of this section or the ***Visible Traces*** poster
Colored markers
11" x 14" sheets of white drawing paper for maps
Paper and pencil for peer analysis

**Assessment Piece** Neighborhood maps, discussion response, written analysis of classmate's map

**Procedure** **1.** Distribute the ***Map of Imperial Territories*** and discuss the **Introductory Questions.**
**2.** Have students use colored markers to draw a map of their neighborhood.
**3.** Post neighborhood maps around the room and ask students the following questions in relation to several maps:
What is at the center of the map?
Are some things depicted larger than others?
Which part of the map is depicted in detail?
Was everything in your neighborhood included in the map?
How did you decide what should be included?
**4.** Return to the ***Map of Imperial Territories*** and discuss the following:
What is at the center of this map?
Are countries other than China shown?
In looking at the map, would one be able to gather much information about countries outside of China?
What might this say about how the people that made and used this map felt about countries outside of China?
The Chinese word for China is *Zhongguo*, meaning "central states" or "middle kingdom." Does this map convey these meanings? How?
**5.** Have students write an analysis of one of their classmates' maps, identifying the kind of information that seems to be valuable to the student who made it. Have students describe how the mapmaker depicted his or her home in relation to the neighborhood.

**Extension** Have students look at other groups' maps of the world (made during different periods if possible) and analyze how these groups see themselves in relation to the rest of the world.

# Activity 1.2 Building an Empire

**Performance Objectives** Nine groups will analyze China's physical features to divide the nation into regions; each group is then assigned to create a travel brochure for each region. Groups then combine their brochures into a bulletin board map of China, discussing commonalities and distinctive features.

**Grade Level** 6–9

**Essential Questions** How have variations in landforms and climate affected the Chinese of each era? What have been key issues for the Chinese, given the vastness and diversity of land?

**Standards**

**Social Studies**

*Geography*

- Mapping information about people, places, and environments
- Understanding the characteristics, functions, and applications of maps
- Investigating why people and places are located where they are and what patterns can be perceived in these locations
- Describing the relationships between people and environments as well as the connections between people and places
- Formulating questions and defining geographic issues and problems
- Using a number of research tools (electronic databases, periodicals, census reports, maps, standard reference works, interviews, surveys) to locate and gather geographic information about issues and problems
- Presenting geographic information in a variety of formats
- Interpreting geographic information by synthesizing data and developing conclusions and generalizations about geographic issues and problems

**Language Arts**

*Language for Information and Understanding*

- Independently selecting and applying strategies for collecting and synthesizing information, such as note cards and bibliographies
- Using a variety of reference books and other data sources to gather information and generate independent understanding about a topic
- Taking research notes and composing a report

## Time Required

Allow three class periods for research, writing, and map building. An additional class period should be reserved for presentations and final discussion.

## Materials

Transparency of **Regional Map of China** handout (create using a photocopier)
Overhead projector
White (or light colored) butcher paper
Photocopies of the blank **Terrain Map of China** handout for each group
Photocopies of the **Regional Map of China** handout
Photocopies of the **Destination China!** handout
Markers/colored pencils for making maps and booklets
Travel guide books (such as Lonely Planet, Fodor's) and possibly reference books, atlases, and Internet access

## Assessment Piece

Regional map of China, travel brochures, oral presentations

## Procedure

**1.** Using the transparency of the **Regional Map of China** handout and an overhead projector, make an enlarged version of the map on butcher paper (about the size of a bulletin board). Cut the map into the nine regions of China.
**2.** Photocopy and distribute the blank **Terrain Map of China** handout.
**3.** Divide the class into nine small groups (two to four students) and ask students to divide China into regions based on the natural features.
**4.** Distribute the **Regional Map of China,** and the **Destination China!** handouts marking the nine geographic regions of China.
**5.** Assign one region to each group. Have students use travel guides, augmented with atlases, reference books, or resources on the Web to research their assigned region's major features and create a travel brochure according to the handout.
**7.** Have groups reassemble the map of China and present research information, attaching their brochures to their region

## Extensions

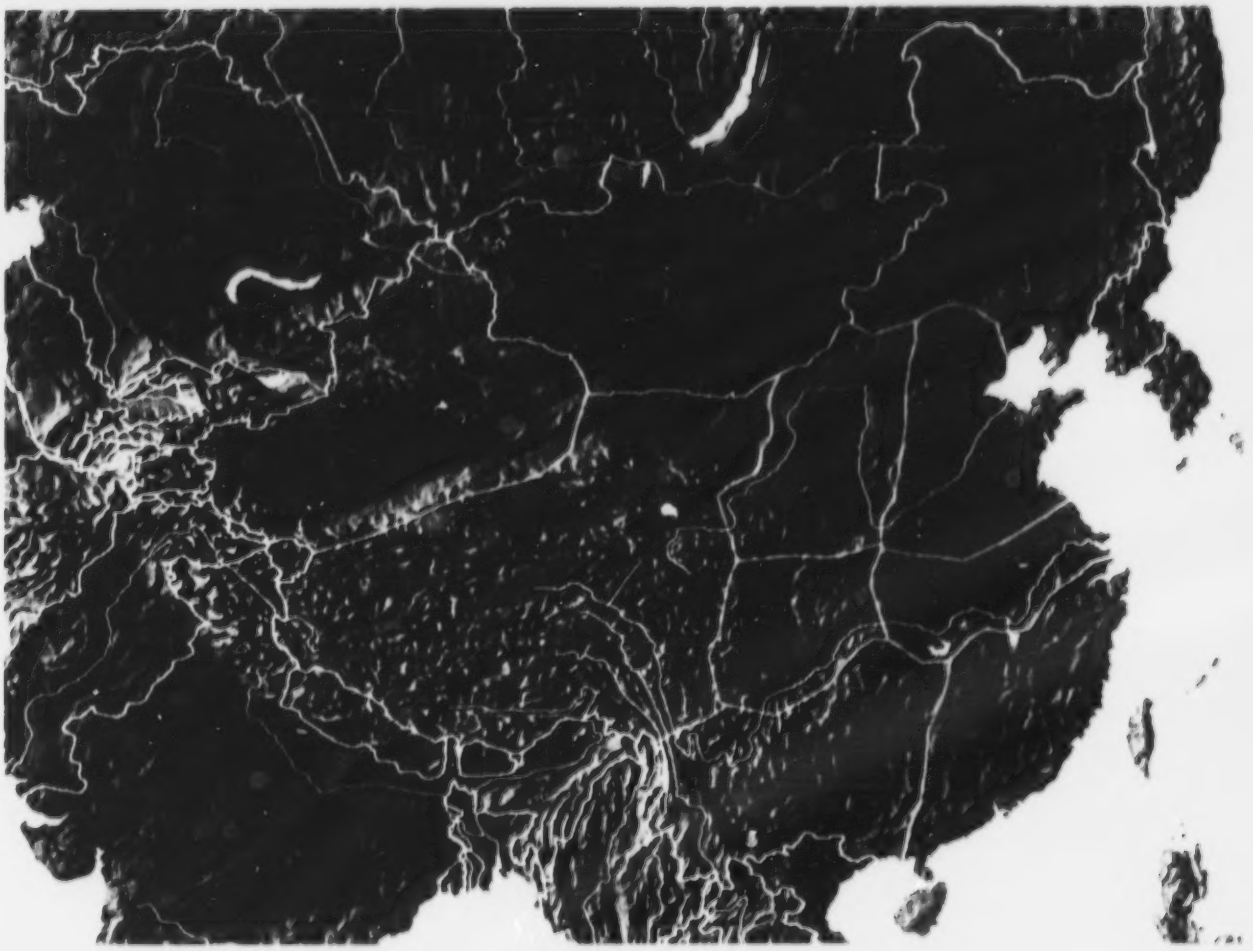
Have students look at a terrain map to divide their home into subregions. Ask them to create collages that address the terrain, climate, industry and economy, housing/shelter, and diet of their home region. Lead the class in a discussion of the similarities and differences among the individual collages.

Consider staging a national conference, whereby each group serves as representatives of their region. They present, as an open letter to the nation, a list of three to five of its significant contributions and outline two resources/commodities/services for which their region is dependent on others.

# Handout Regional Map of China

Mountain High Maps © 2000 Digital Wisdom and Asia Society

# Handout Terrain Map of China



Mountain High Maps © 2000 Digital Wisdom and Asia Society

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# Handout Destination China!

You will be leading a tour group to explore one of the nine geographical regions of China and must design a brochure. Use travel guides, atlases, reference books, or resources on the Web to research your region's major features and create a travel brochure for a two week-tour.

Your brochure should include the following:

The provinces that are in your region of China.

Your itinerary (Research what major city you will have your group fly into, and how you will travel to your destinations. Be sure to factor in travel time on your itinerary. Provide a brief description of the major attractions that you will visit.)

What time of year the tour group will travel and why that is the best season to visit that region.

What should the travelers pack? (Consider the typical weather conditions for that time of year, the modes of travel, and your activities--will you be taking horse treks, climbing into Buddhist caves, or experiencing the nightlife of the big cities?)

What regional foods might your tour expect to eat?

What souvenirs or regional specialties might they expect to buy?

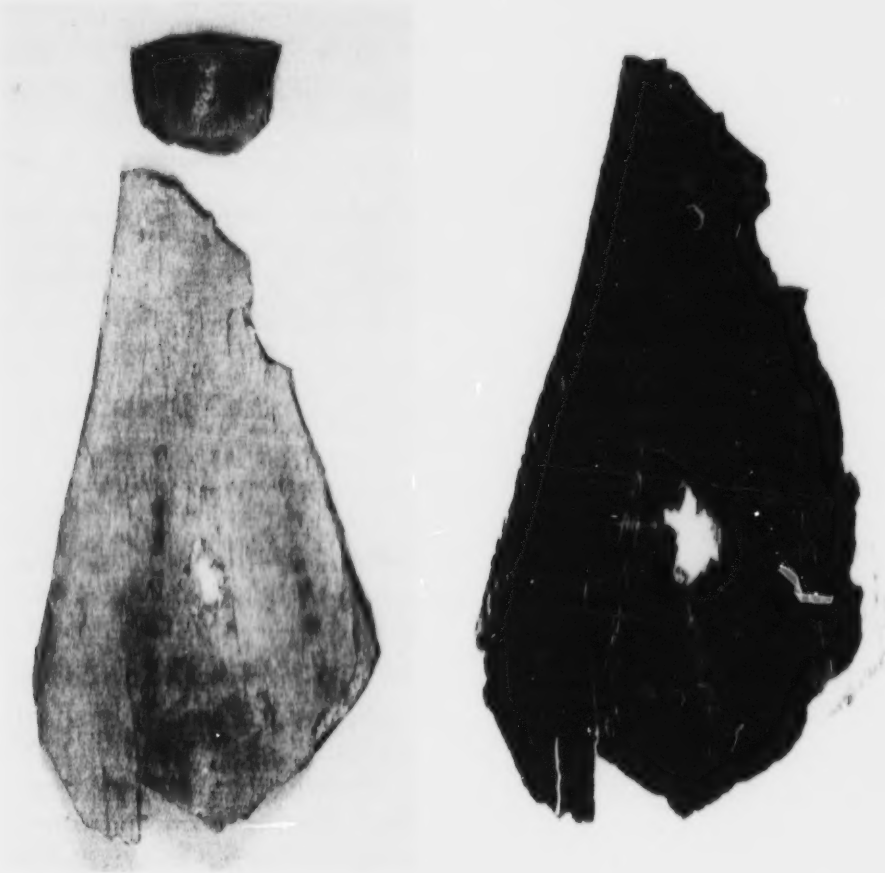
Based on exchange rates as well as the cost of travel in China, what is the price of your tour? How much spending money do you recommend the travelers bring?

# Theme 2 Traces of Ideas: Communicating Through Writing and Technology

Try to imagine a world without writing: no Internet, no E-mail, no newspapers, no sports page, no baseball scores, no love letters, no messages sneaked to one's neighbor during class, no on-line trading, no best-sellers, no college or job applications. Writing is central to our everyday lives as well as to our understanding of the past. How can we study history without written records? (We even call the time before writing prehistory.) How can we transmit the wisdom of the past to future generations without writing?

The earliest examples of Chinese writing were used by Shang rulers to try to project what would happen in the future so they would know how to rule; this early writing was very important both ritually and politically. Written Chinese also played a significant role in unifying diverse areas and people who spoke many different dialects. Because its characters are logographic—that is, they represent words or a minimal unit of meaning, not sounds—literate people, no matter what dialect they spoke, could read the characters (as we read international road signs, such as No Right Turn). The Chinese invented paper and created printing, which developed from ink rubbings on stones and metals.

***Traces of Ideas*** introduces students to written Chinese and woodblock printing. The first background essay, **"Tradition and Transformation in the Chinese Writing System,"** provides information about the characteristics of written Chinese and how it has changed over time. The second essay, **"Writing and Technology in China,"** focuses on technologies for writing and printing. In the activities, **Creating Characters, Woodblock Printing,** and **Writing Timelines,** students are introduced to the concept of a logographic language by creating their own symbols for words and to the concept of block printing by printing posters.



**Ox scapula fragments (oracle bone)**
Shang dynasty (ca. 1600–ca. 1100 B.C.E.), undated, from the reign of the king Wu Ding (ca. 1198–ca. 1189 B.C.E.).
Two fragments; dimensions vary (a: 4.8 x 7.5 cm; b: 27.7 x 15.2 cm).

## Introductory Questions

People in early China tried to tell the future by communicating with spirits. They would inscribe questions onto an animal bone or turtle shell. After boring holes through the bone or shell, they would insert a stick into it, which they would then heat. As the stick expanded, the bone cracked and a shaman, or person who could communicate with spirits, interpreted the cracks to read the future.

- Find the writing on the bone. Where is it in relation to the cracks? Look at the writing on the shoulder blade of an ox, above. How might the characters have been inscribed into the hard bone surface?
- What would have been the advantages and limitations of writing on bone and shell?
- More casual forms of writing from this period have not been found. Does this mean that they did not exist? Why or why not?

**Greater Sutra of the Perfection of Transcendent Wisdom (Mahaprajnaparamita-sutra), 600 juan from the Jin Tripitaka at Zhaocheng**

Jin dynasty (1115–1234), Huangtong period (1141–1148) through Dading period (1161–1189), printed between 1149 and 1173.
Translated from the Sanskrit by Xuanzang (602–664).
From the Tripitaka deposited at Guangsheng Temple, Zhaocheng County, Shanxi province.
Handscroll containing juan 103, woodblock-printed ink on paper, 29.8 x 1,320.0 cm.

A sutra is a Buddhist sermon. Many sutras were written on handscrolls. After writing scrolls in ink, artists might carve whole sections of a scroll in mirror image on a block of wood. Applying ink to the block, they would then smooth paper on top to produce a print. Written Chinese has over 50,000 characters (though knowledge of between three and four thousand is required for literacy). Although the Chinese invented printing by movable type in the twelfth century, many printers still preferred the woodblock method.

## Introductory Questions

- This sutra originally was transcribed with a brush and ink. Describe how the characters differ from those on the oracle bone and shell.
- What stylistic characteristics do the written characters share with the painting of the Buddha on the right-hand side?
- Why might making prints be important for Buddhist texts?
- What are other instances in world history where a belief system has benefited from printing and communication technology?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of using woodblock printing?
- Movable type was invented in China in the mid-eleventh century. Individual characters made of fired clay were assembled and glued onto a plate to create a printing block. The number of unique characters in a book might reach into the thousands, meaning that a printer would have to stock from 20,000 to up to 400,000 character types in order to meet the demand of a book. Woodblock printing was less expensive and more popular than movable type in China. In Europe, however, movable type proved very popular after it was introduced during the fifteenth century. Why might this have been the case?

Background Essay

# Tradition and Transformation in the Chinese Writing System

Jerry Norman

Most of the world's languages are written alphabetically; in an alphabetic writing system the basic components represent sounds only without any reference to meaning. For example, the letter "b" in English represents a voiced bilabial stop, but no particular meaning can be attached to it in its function as a letter of the alphabet. Chinese writing is logographic, that is, every symbol either represents a word or a minimal unit of meaning. When I write the character 牛, it not only has a sound, *niu,* it has a meaning, "cow." Only a small number of symbols is necessary in an alphabetic system (generally under 50), but a logographic system, such as Chinese writing requires thousands of symbols.

From the aspects of sound, every Chinese character represents one syllable. Many of these syllables are also words, but we should not think that every word in modern Chinese is monosyllabic. The word for "television," for example, is 電視, *dianshi:* since this word has two syllables, it is necessary to write it with two characters. Each of these characters has an independent meaning: *dian* means "electric," and *shi* means "vision"; in this particular case neither of the characters can be used alone in modern Chinese as a word; however, in the Chinese of two and a half millennia ago, both characters were independent words. So, when we say that Chinese has a logographic writing system, one in which each basic symbol represents an independent syllable, we are speaking of the Chinese of a much earlier period.

How many characters does the average literate Chinese person know? Studies carried out in China have shown that full literacy requires a knowledge of between three and four thousand characters. Learning so many characters is very time-consuming and places a heavy burden on students. This has led many Chinese in the past to advocate the abolition of characters in favor of an alphabetic system, but such programs have met with little success. We will return to the question of script reform below.

Although literacy requires the knowledge of a few thousand characters, the total number of characters is much greater. A dictionary produced in the eleventh century contained more than fifty-three thousand characters. Even when one takes into account that many of these characters represented rare words and many others were merely different ways of writing the same word, the number still seems staggering. Fortunately, the average person is required to know only a small percentage of this enormous number. It is

interesting that both printing and movable type were invented in China. The latter, however, was little used until modern times. Most printing used wooden blocks on which characters were carved individually in meticulous detail. Undoubtedly the reason for this was the large number of characters used in ordinary printing; it was easier to carve individual blocks than it was to create a stock of several thousand type and set it by hand. On the other hand, movable type is eminently suited to alphabetic writing systems. Nowadays characters can easily be written on a computer, and older methods of printing are rapidly disappearing.

Chinese writing has a history of some three thousand five hundred years. It is not as old as Sumerian or Egyptian writing; there is no certain evidence, however, that the invention of writing in China was in any way stimulated by the earlier existence of writing in the Near East. The earliest examples of Chinese writing are *divinatory* texts written on bones and shells. These usually consist of a question put to a diviner along with his answer. This earliest Chinese script shows that in its earliest history, Chinese writing was based on pictures. The word for "cow" was clearly the picture of a cow's head; "to go" was written with the picture of a foot. However, a little reflection shows that it is impossible to have a fully pictorial system of writing. How would one depict, for example, some abstract grammatical notion such as "completion of an action"? It would seem that from the very beginning of writing certain symbols that originated as pictograms were used for their sound alone, and it was only when this *phonetic* use of characters was introduced that a complete graphic record of language was possible. In the history of Chinese writing the number of characters that contained a phonetic element grew progressively, but Chinese never abandoned the principle of one character per word (or at least one character for each meaningful element).

*Divinatory*
The practice of predicting the future using omens or supernatural powers.

*Phonetic*
Symbols representing the sounds of speech.

In the earliest Chinese writing its pictographic origins are still quite obvious. Over the course of time, however, the script underwent many changes, so that by the Han dynasty (206 B.C.E.–220 C.E.), the script had lost most of its pictorial quality. The present-day standard script (called *kaishu* in Chinese) took shape during the third and fourth centuries C.E. After that the form of the script remained surprisingly unchanged until modern times. In addition to standard forms, there are also several cursive forms of the script; the two most common are *caoshu* and *xingshu*. *Caoshu*, which means something like "drafting script," is highly cursive and difficult for people without special training to read. *Xingshu* is a sort of compromise between the highly cursive *caoshu* and the standard script. It is widely used by ordinary Chinese when writing letters or engaging in other informal sorts of writing.

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The art of calligraphy is highly developed in China. For this purpose a traditional writing brush is employed, and the calligrapher may specialize in one of several different styles. Calligraphy is one of China's major visual arts, many painters and scholars were also accomplished calligraphers. The cultivation of artistic writing is only one of many practices that show how deeply the writing system is rooted in Chinese culture. Despite recurrent suggestions to replace the traditional script with alphabetic writing, with all its obvious conveniences, the Chinese writing system remains integral to Chinese self-definition. In a country with hundreds of different dialects a common script that is independent of this dialectal diversity is a powerful symbol of national unity.

In the 1920s and 1930s, many Chinese intellectuals viewed the script as a serious problem in China's attempt to become a part of the modern world. It was portrayed as cumbersome, difficult to learn and out of date. As a result, many advocated the outright abandonment of the traditional script in favor of an alphabetic system. Contrary to what many have claimed, there is a reason that Chinese cannot be written alphabetically, and a number of practical *orthographies* have been proposed. One problem that the proponents of alphabetic writing were not able to overcome was that for such a writing system to be practical, it would have to be adapted to various regional dialects; such a move was viewed as potentially divisive and harmful to the idea of a single Chinese nation. Ultimately all such ideas were abandoned, and attention turned to simplification of the traditional script, the idea being that the writing system would be easier to learn. It was not until the 1950s that effective steps were taken to carry out such a plan. In 1956 and again in 1964, lists of simplified characters were officially adopted in the People's Republic of China.

*Orthography*
The art of representing a language using letters and spelling.

*Complex and Simplified Forms of Chinese Characters*

| English | Chinese pronunciation | Complex | Simplified |
|---|---|---|---|
| horse | mǎ | 馬 | 马 |
| to read | dú | 讀 | 读 |
| country | guó | 國 | 国 |
| book | shū | 書 | 书 |

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*Auxiliary*
Functioning in a supplementary role.

Hong Kong and Taiwan continued to use the traditional characters, a situation that still prevails. In 1957 an alphabetic system called Pinyin was introduced in the People's Republic of China as an *auxiliary* system to be used in teaching correct pronunciation in schools and for use in various sorts of reference works, chiefly dictionaries. Note, however, that there have been no practical steps taken to use Pinyin as an official orthography in Chinese. For the foreseeable future, there seems to be no prospect of abandoning the traditional logographic script.

At different points in history the Chinese script was adapted by several neighboring countries—Vietnam, Korea, and Japan. For centuries classical Chinese was the official written language in these countries. Vietnam has now adopted the Latin alphabet, and, while Korea has had its own script, hangul, since the fifteenth century, it has only come into widespread use in the last one hundred years. Chinese characters still enjoy official status in Japan, and, as in China, there seems to be little chance that they will be abandoned anytime soon.

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Background Essay

# Writing and Technology in China

Irene S. Leung

## Early Writing Technologies

The earliest writings in China were found on ox scapulae, tortoiseshells, and bronzes during the Shang dynasty. Dated from around 1400–1200 B.C.E., the inscriptions on bones and shells—called "oracle bones"—recorded divination used by the Shang royal house. The words were carved with a *stylus*, some were written with brush and ink made of *lampblack* or *cinnabar*. On bronzes, inscriptions were cast on sacrificial vessels, ritual bells, and seals. These inscriptions range from a few to as many as five hundred characters.

*Stylus*
A hard-pointed, pen-shaped instrument used to write on clay tablets.

*Lampblack*
Black carbon compounds produced by burning oil.

*Cinnabar*
A red ore that is a part of mercury. It is used as a pigment for painting.

*Pine soot*
A fine black powder compound produced by burning pinewood.

*Musk*
An oil with a sharp, lasting odor taken from the gland of a musk deer. It is used as a perfume fixative or glue for liquids.

*Camphor*
A tough, gummy, unstable, scented substance found in the wood and bark of the camphor tree.

The brush pen was used as early as the seventh or sixth century B.C.E. The holder is made of bamboo, and the tip is made of wolf, rabbit, or goat hair. Brush-point size depends upon its use in executing different styles of characters. The brush was used in conjunction with ink, a permanent black pigment that could not be washed out after being applied. The basic ingredients for ink are *pine soot* or lampblack and glue (as a binding agent) with any other miscellaneous additives, such as gold flakes, *musk*, and *camphor*. Ink is kept as a solid, dry stick until ready for use. A writer then grinds the dry ink stick against an "inkstone," a polished and often decorative piece of stone with a shallow bowl carved into one end. Water is added to the shallow bowl, while the writer moves the inkstick in a circular motion to form dark, liquid ink. When a desired blackness of ink is reached, the writer then uses his or her brush to lift the ink directly from the inkstone. Ink is judged by its insolubility, luster of pigment, and hardness.

Archaeological evidence shows paper was invented around the first century B.C.E. By the third century C.E., paper was already widely used for making books. Since paper was made of readily available materials, such as raw hemp and tree bark, it was inexpensive to produce.

The four implements of brush, ink, inkstone and paper, were later dubbed the "Four Treasures of the Scholar's Studio." The scholar-official class, an outgrowth of the bureaucratic government, used these treasures as tools of communication and self-expression through calligraphy.
(See Section 5, ***Traces of the Self***.)

## Chinese Books and Printing Technologies

Chinese books began as thin slips of bamboo or wood connected by thongs and used like paged books or scrolls. Recovered from tombs, the oldest of

these dates back to third or fourth century B.C.E. They were used for official documents, private letters, calendars, laws and statutes, prescriptions, literary texts, and miscellaneous records. These bamboo or wood documents were sometimes considered drafts, the final editions were written on silk, which had been used for writing since the sixth or seventh century B.C.E. Since silk provided larger continuous writing surfaces that could be tailored to the needs of each patron, it was used for maps, illustrations, and more formal inscriptions, such as religious sacrifices, quotations of kings, and achievements of great statesmen and military heroes. Surviving silk fragments also show that this material was used for letters because it was lightweight and easy to transport.

Printing developed from engraving on stones and metals as well as taking ink rubbings from stone reliefs. Ink rubbings are impressions of relief designs of text or pictures. A sheet of paper is laid on the stone and moistened with water. The paper is then squeezed against the surface and pressed lightly into every depression with a brush, and ink is applied to it with a pad. When the rubbing is peeled off and pressed flat, the parts of the paper where there are characters or pictures will appear white, while the rest will appear black.

Woodblock printing uses a similar method and is a very simple and inexpensive process. A sheet of paper upon which text has been written in ink with a brush is inverted and pasted on a wooden tablet. An engraver then carves the tablet where the parts of the paper are white. As a result, only the parts bearing characters (in reverse) stand out in relief. The printer then brushes ink on the printing block to which blank sheets of paper are pressed. A skilled printer could turn out as many as 1,500 copies a day. Technically, a single block could be used to print thousands of copies, though most editors ran a few hundred copies.

Woodblock printing began to replace hand copying around 700 C.E. It grew out of religious demand for copies of Buddhist and Daoist scriptures and secular demand for the reproduction of classical text used in the civil service examinations. The existence of these examinations, based on the study of topics such as philosophy, history, and literature throughout the history of premodern China, assured the primacy of print culture.

The Song dynasty (960–1279 C.E.) saw a great proliferation of publishing. Government offices, schools, monasteries, private families, and private bookshops participated in the printing business. The advent and spread of commercial printing transformed popular culture and society. Published books covered a wide range of topics and interests, including history, geography, philosophy, poetry and prose, divination, archaeology, scientific and technical writing, and medicine. Movable type was invented in the mid-

eleventh century. It was based on a principle of assembling individual characters made of fired clay to compose a text that would then be glued onto a plate to create a printing block. Common characters needed twenty or more types in case many were called for on the same page. Characters not being used were kept in wooden cases, according to their rhyme group.

Movable type did not prove to be popular. As opposed to Europe, where movable type was suitable for alphabetic languages with limited numbers of symbols, China, where the number of unique characters in a book might reach into the thousands, found it less practical and cost-efficient. A printer would have to stock from 20,000 to up to 400,000 character types in order to meet the demand of a book—a tremendous initial investment. The printer would have to make hundreds of thousands of copies in order to make a profit. Therefore, printing from movable type compared very unfavorably with the low cost of woodblock printing. A printer could choose to make under a hundred copies of an edition. The block could then be stored for printing again at a later date, depending on demand.

Because the written language was standardized, book publishing was not affected by regional dialects. Since rural areas and urban sectors were less sharply differentiated than their counterparts in premodern Europe and the literate population resided both in the countryside and the cities, book publishing flourished in smaller locales as well. Expanded education and increased economic prosperity in the sixteenth century contributed to an even greater rise in the demand for books. Furthermore, there were more educated individuals who wanted to work for the state bureaucracy than there were available positions. Failed examination candidates made up a large literate social class by the Ming dynasty (1368–1644 C.E.). In addition to the scholar-officials, these individuals became consumers and producers of print culture.

### Modernization, the Press, and Public Opinion

At the end of the nineteenth century, European missionaries and businessmen introduced mechanization and various printing forms. During this time, political information and new ideas were disseminated exclusively through print. At first government edicts were printed and circulated throughout the empire to several tens of thousands of local officials. Later, sensational news was reported on news sheets printed irregularly in the cities. The papers were first bought for entertainment. Soon timely news about political events, war, and peace negotiations spurred expansion of newspaper printing.

During this period, treaty ports were set up by Western powers in coastal China. Some periodicals were sponsored by missionaries but written by

Chinese editors. These weeklies or monthlies also began to report international news. With the expansion of readership, modern printing machines became essential to the rapid production of widely circulated periodicals. This nationwide print culture gradually gave the educated class a greater sense of national identity. They also became aware of the press's potential to educate and mobilize the people against the central government.

Following the overthrow of the Qing dynasty, the Republic of China was established in 1911. The vision of a modern society began to be put forth in a large number of newspapers and periodicals. These were often written in simple *vernacular* language, rather than in *classical Chinese*, which had been the language used in early newspapers. The articles addressed a range of social and cultural problems, bridging class as well as regional and occupational lines, drawing millions together.

*Vernacular*
The normal spoken form of a language.

*Classical Chinese*
A literary, formal language used by educated persons throughout China until well into the early twentieth century.

By the 1930s the government continued to face the enormous task of national reunification and economic reconstruction. It began to censor newspapers, journals, and books in order to crack down on Communism. Some intellectuals took their ideas underground. These activists looked toward woodcut as a swift, inexpensive means of creating graphics or pamphlets to spread their ideas. The prints celebrated the courage of students who evaded the police or protested against censorship and publicized the plight of the urban and rural poor.

After the Communist Revolution in 1949, the Party controlled newspapers and journals through state-owned enterprises. For the next decades the print media was used to publicize government policies and propaganda during collectivization movements and ideological campaigns. During the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), Red Guards turned to a more spontaneous medium to denounce alleged counterrevolutionaries. They wrote "big character posters" and posted them outside people's houses or schools to publicly expose their alleged crimes. By the end of the Cultural Revolution, however, the role was reversed. The same print media in turn kept the bureaucracy in check through journalists who investigated abuses of government units and officials. These media also became a forum for citizens to voice grievances. They circulated stories about the horrors and tragedies experienced by many during the Cultural Revolution. This criticism and self-criticism stimulated new debates and reflections on China's past and its future prospects.

Economic innovation and growth in the 1980s began to raise questions of political reform beyond the basic principles of the Chinese Communist Party. While the government was able to control print media, and to a certain extent radio, television, and satellite access, the advent of telecommunication technologies and the Internet revolution in the 1990s make it increasingly

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impossible for the government to control and monitor news and public opinion. Despite the fact that Internet access is still available only in urban areas, it has enjoyed spectacular success in China in the last five years. One recent figure shows that the number of Internet users grew to 8.9 million in 1999 and the Chinese government predicts that by 2003 Internet use will reach 20 million. Most Internet users are people between the ages of 20 and 40. About 85 percent of users are male, and many earn above average income. They use the Internet to find out about news and current affairs as well as for entertainment. Technological innovation has not only provided faster and easier access to print media, it has transformed people's relationship to each other and the government's relationship to its constituents.

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# Activity 2.1 Creating Characters

**Performance Objectives** Students will identify simply pictographs and ideographs from Chinese writing. After creating their own images, they will combine characters to communicate ideas to one another, introducing basic foundations of the Chinese writing system.

**Grade Level** Elementary, middle school

**Essential Questions** How did the Chinese writing system develop over time?
How is the Chinese writing system uniquely suited to the Chinese language?
As the Chinese writing system developed, what effect did it have on society?
What are the advantages and disadvantages of the Chinese writing and phonetic systems?

**Standards**

**Language Arts**

*Language for Information and Understanding*

• Using language to explain how a problem was solved or a task was conducted

*Language for Social Interaction*

• Understanding how to take turns and respond to others' ideas in conversations on familiar topics

**Social Studies**

*World History*

• Studying about different world cultures and civilizations, focusing on their accomplishments, contributions, values, beliefs and traditions

• Understanding the roles and contributions of individuals and groups to social, political, economic, cultural, scientific, technological, and religious practices and activities

• View historic events through the eyes of those who were there, as shown in their art, writing, music, and artifacts

**Time Required** One class period

**Materials** Photocopies of the **Oracle Bone** and **Introductory Questions** from the beginning of this section, the **Order of Language** handout, or the ***Visible Traces*** poster
Pencils
Chalkboard and chalk

Assessment Piece Pictograph/Ideograph sheet and character constructions

Procedure **1.** As a class, examine the **Oracle Bone** (either as a handout or on the poster) and discuss the **Introductory Questions**.

**2.** Discuss the notion of power and writing, considering the following:
The Chinese written language underwent much development during the Shang dynasty (ca. 1600–ca. 1100 B.C.E.). The Shang dynasty is also known for its highly stratified social structure with a few people ruling many. How might writing be related to this? What happens in a society if only a few are allowed access to information and knowledge?

**3.** Give the **Order of Languages** handout to students. Introduce the concepts of pictographs and ideographs in Chinese characters.

**4.** Have students complete the sheet, drawing a line to the appropriate modern form of the characters listed. Discuss the following:
Writing with a brush on wood strips was developed as early as the seventh or sixth century B.C.E. while paper was invented around the first century B.C.E. Are these inventions related to the way Chinese characters developed? Which forms of characters do students think would be easier to learn and quicker to write?
What might the effect be on society if writing becomes easier to learn and execute? [During the Han dynasty (206 B.C.E–220 C.E.) Chinese society was greatly restructured as the educated bureaucratic class became a dominant force in society and government.]

**5.** Working in groups of three to five, have students generate their own pictographs for several concrete objects. (Examples might be apple, man, horse, chair, book.) Have students share one of the objects and its pictograph with the class by drawing it on a transparency for the class to guess what it might stand for. Remind students that since our goal is effective communication, they should make the symbols as easy to recognize as possible. Identify these characters as pictographs.

**6.** Now have students attempt to create a symbol for abstract concepts. Give each group a list of three concepts (examples: love, happy, life, smart, yellow, school). Again they should share their character with the class, having other students guess what it represents.

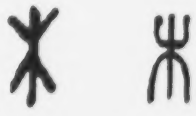
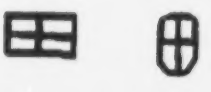
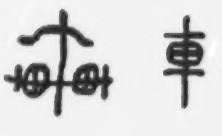
**7.** When all students have shared one of their concepts with the class, discuss the differences between the object-based pictographs and the ideographs that represent concepts.
Ask students: Which was harder to represent and identify? Why?
How did this affect the way you were able to communicate?
What are other ways that we communicate an idea (spoken, written, pictures, gestures)?

**8.** Have the class develop criteria for selecting symbols that best convey an object or idea. Consider simplicity and ease in reproducing the symbol.

Extension Have students generate enough characters to form a simple sentence. For example, "I will eat lunch at noon." Have them present their sentances to the rest of the class. Ask the students: Were you successful in communicating? How many symbols did you need to use? What problems did you face as you combined objects and concepts? Based on this experience, what advantages might a character-based language have? What advantages might a phonetic-based system have?

# Handout Order in Language

Over the centuries, Chinese characters have evolved and can be grouped into six different categories. The oldest characters comprise the first and smallest group, called pictographs—simple drawings that look like the object they represent, e.g., sun, horse, or tree. The characters you will be examining below are pictographs. Look at them and see if you can match the older form of the character with its modern form.

| meaning | gradual evolution | modern form |
|---|---|---|
| sun | | 車 |
| tree |  | 日 |
| person | | 口 |
| mouth | | 人 |
| field |  | 木 |
| cart/vehicle |  | 田 |

However, as pictographs had certain limitations, such as not being able to convey abstract ideas, a second category, called ideographs, was created. Here are some examples of ideographs:

above 上 below 下

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A more complex form of ideographs is called "compound ideographs" where two pictographs come together to make an ideograph.

sun 日 + moon 月 = bright 明

person 人 + person 人 = to agree/to follow 从

sun 日 + tree 木 = east (sun rising above the trees in the east.) 東

Try to guess the meaning of these compound ideographs:

tree 木 + tree 木 = 林 *

person 人 + an enclosure or confine 口 = 囚 **

The most common type of character, however, is known as a "phonetic compound." One part hints at the sound of the character, the other part hints at the meaning.

(*ke*) 可 + water signifier 氵 = (*he*) river 河

(*fu*) 夫 + hand signifier 夫 = (*fu*) support with the hand 扶

(*min*) 民 + eye signifier 目 = (*mian*) sleep 眠

*This handout has been adapted with permission from the Stanford Program on International and Cross-Cultural Education(SPICE)* Demystifying the Chinese Language*(1980).*

**Answers:** *grove/forest, **prisoner

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# Activity 2.2 Woodblock Printing

**Performance Objectives** Students will become familiar with the traditional techniques of woodblock printing developed in China and how it was used for communication. Students will identify a message of importance to them, develop a woodblock, make prints, and distribute their "messages." They will assess the effectiveness of their communication efforts by conducting a school survey.

**Grade Level** 9–12

**Variation Grade Level** 3–5

**Essential Questions** How have forms of communication evolved and affected ways of living?
How has China exported its ideas to other peoples over the course of history?
How does technology assist in the dissemination of information?
What Chinese breakthroughs and innovations have made a significant impact on world culture?

**Standards** **Social Studies**

*World History*

- Knowing important historic events and developments of past civilizations
- Interpreting and analyzing documents and artifacts related to significant developments and events in world history
- Studying major turning points in world history by investigating the causes and other factors that brought them about as well as their results
- Studying about different world cultures and civilizations, focusing on their accomplishments, contributions, values, beliefs, and traditions
- Understanding the roles and contributions of individuals and groups to social, political, economic, cultural, scientific, technological and religious practices and activities
- Viewing historic events through the eyes of those who were there, as shown in their art, writing, music, and artifacts

*Civics, Citizenship, and Government*

- Participating in school/classroom/community activities that focus on an issue or problem
- Preparing a plan of action that defines an issue or problem, suggests alternative solutions of courses of action, evaluates the consequences of each alternative solution or course of action, prioritizes the solutions based on

established criteria, and proposes an action plan to address the issue or resolve the problem

**Visual Arts**

- Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes
- Taking advantage of the qualities of techniques and processes to enhance communication of experiences and ideas
- Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas
- Integrating visual, spatial, and temporal concepts with content to communicate intended meaning
- Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures

**Time Required** Allow at least two class periods for designing and cutting the blocks. An additional class period is needed for inking and pressing prints. One class period will be needed to develop a survey, and another will be required to interpret the results.

**Materials** Photocopies of the ***Greater Sutra of the Perfection of Transcendent Wisdom*** and **Introductory Questions** from the beginning of this section or the ***Visible Traces*** poster
Paper, pencil, and pen for designing blocks
Linoleum blocks for each student
Cutting instruments for each student
Rollers, ink pans, and brushes for applying ink
Ink and paper for pressing prints

**Assessment Piece** Block prints

**Procedure** **1.** Block print technology was used in China as a means of spreading the Buddhist doctrine or to distribute political information. Disseminating blocks of text through this inexpensive procedure had a deep cultural impact. Distribute photocopies of the ***Greater Sutra of the Perfection of Transcendent Wisdom*** and discuss the **Introductory Questions**. Have students generate a list of topics relating to our society that might be circulated by similar means. They might include signs prohibiting drugs, alcohol, or smoking; political posters for upcoming campaigns; slogans promoting respect and responsibility issues for students; or community action posters related to local issues.

**2.** Distribute writing implements to students and have them create a page featuring an image and words expressing an important idea or goal they

would like to share, in keeping with the tradition of woodblock sutra prints. Advanced students might create a message in Chinese calligraphy for a closer rendition of the printed sutra.

**3.** Remember that all images must be produced in reverse on the block in order to transfer when printed. Have students use a soft lead or drawing pencil to shade areas to be cut out of the block. These areas will remain white after printing.

**4.** Students should then transfer images by placing them facedown on blocks and gently rubbing on the other side of the paper. They should then remove the paper and use a pen to detail the image permanently before cutting.

**5.** Next students should cut out areas of blocks around words and images. Blades on cutting implements should always move away from the body.

**6.** Have students lay block in drip pan. They should then apply ink to the roller. Ink should be spread on a flat surface, rolled until evenly applied, and spread over block image.

**7.** Students should handle blocks carefully by edges to invert and press onto paper. They can experiment with color variations and thickness of application in producing a series of images.

**8.** They should then allow impressions to dry, laying them flat.

**9.** Have students post their works in a community area of the school and then develop a survey to determine the impact of their campaign.

**10.** Questions might include:

Did you see the block print messages?
How often in each school day?
Did you think about the message?
Did this provide new information?
Would this influence your opinion?
Is this an effective means of getting out a message or providing information?

**Variation for Grades 3–5**

Instead of linoleum blocks use Styrofoam blocks (4 x 6 in.) for each student (containers from grocery stores work well, but never recycle those used for meat products, as they may carry bacteria even after washing). Substitute clay sculpting tools or dull pencils for cutting instruments for each student. Have students design their images as noted above. Then instead of transferring the image onto linoleum blocks, have students press the image into Styrofoam squares using dull pencil or clay sculpting tools. Next, have them apply ink with rollers and press as per directions above.

# Activity 2.3 Writing Timelines

**Performance Objectives**

The class will generate timelines of the development of communication technologies from writing systems to the Internet. A variety of writing systems, means of communicating, factors that brought about advances, and the resulting societal changes will be highlighted in this activity. These timelines offer the advantage of providing students with the opportunity to reflect their knowledge through various modalities in sequencing, writing, models, and oral interpretations of their work.

**Grade Level**

6–8

**Variation Grade Level**

9–12

**Essential Questions**

What Chinese breakthroughs and innovations have made a significant impact on world culture?

How might one explain the similarities and differences between Chinese technological innovations and the significant contributions of other cultures?

**Standards**

**Social Studies**

*World History*

- Developing timelines by placing important events and developments in world history in chronological order
- Measuring periods in terms of years, decades, centuries, and millennia
- Studying major turning points in world history by investigating the causes and other factors that brought them about as well as their results
- Investigating important events and developments in world history by posing analytical questions, selecting relevant data, distinguishing fact from opinion, hypothesizing cause-and-effect relationships, testing hypotheses, and forming conclusions

**Language Arts**

*Language for Information and Understanding*

- Following directions that involve a series of actions
- Locating and using information on a wide range of topics from general reference materials
- Independently selecting and applying strategies for collecting and synthesizing information

**Time Required** If completed in class, construction and research requires about a week. Homework time can be used for research or constructing models in order to reduce class time or to develop more detailed work.

**Materials**
Photocopies of the **Writing Timelines Instruction Sheet** handout
Poster board or oak tag
Pencils
Rulers
Colored pencils, markers, crayons
Scissors
Illustrations, pictures, Web site addresses to download pictures
Scanner to duplicate pictures (optional)

**Assessment Piece** Timelines and oral presentation

**Procedure**

**1.** Assign groups of three to five students. Distribute the **Writing Timelines Instruction Sheet** and review project requirements with the class. Brainstorm ideas to be included as three-dimensional additions to the timelines. Review available classroom materials and encourage students to bring additional materials and resources from home.

**2.** Have students begin by deciding on a scale, stressing that periods of equal years must be of equal length. Since timelines will extend for several thousand years, a scale of 10 inches for each 1,000 years should be sufficient.

**3.** Students should then measure and cut oak tag or poster board into eight-inch-wide strips for each period. Carefully fold the strips in half along their length, so that when opened they can stand freely in an A-frame shape. Have students use pencil and ruler to mark the length of each strip to represent a period. Materials may be arranged along the timeline, connected by string to indicate specific dates, or placed on the timeline itself. This works well as a portable timeline frame, though ambitious students may choose to construct their timeline of other materials.

**4.** Allow students to research, write, and build models for required elements of the timeline. At the end of each workday, it is helpful to allow a few minutes for the groups to evaluate their progress and set goals for the following day.

**5.** On the last day of the project, groups should take turns in making an oral presentation of their timeline to the class.

**6.** Remind students that improving technology exposes greater numbers of people to ideas at a cost that is manageable. Ideas are shared in ways that change lives. Sharing or controlling ideas have been concerns of both religious groups and political leaders throughout history. China has been no

exception. Discuss the following points with students in ending the project.
From your timelines, what were some of the reasons that writing was developed or what were some communications problems solved by technology?
Who were usually the first people in a civilization to practice the skills of reading and writing? Why?
How does writing consolidate a culture or group of people?
How do governments or religious groups use and control communication for their benefit? Does this still occur?
How has the use of modern technology—phone, fax, and especially the Internet—changed the availability and our methods of getting information?
How can we test the accuracy of what we read?

**Extension** Make an oversized classroom timeline of poster board lengths that can accommodate students' contributions throughout the school year. Post communication entries on the timeline as students learn about a variety of civilizations. Add information in such categories as governance, belief systems, cultural developments, ways of living, transportation, defense, and technology. Post biographies of influential figures along the timeline and add depictions of art and artifacts as appropriate. At key points hold a class discussion noting global trends, periods of significant change, advancement and decline, and innovation.

**Variation for Grades 9–12** Have students write a paper about one of the writing developments in the timeline. Students must show how the development directly affected another area of society, such as governance, belief systems, cultural developments, ways of living, transportation, or defense.

# Handout Writing Timelines Instruction Sheet

The history of language and writing technologies is an important part of humankind's history. To understand the impact of writing on culture, you will be making a timeline, in groups of three to five students, that will show the diversity of writing systems and change that advances in communication bring to a culture. Team members will share research, writing, building models, and constructing the timeline to help you organize your knowledge. Begin by identifying four civilizations whose history of writing and communication you would like to highlight in your timeline. Each group should include the history of Chinese writing systems, as this is a central theme in our project.

For each civilization that will appear on your timeline, include the following elements.

**1.** An example of the writing form. If possible, include examples of changes over time. Give a brief (one paragraph) description of the structure of the language.

**2.** A map or written description of where the system originated.

**3.** Reasons that a writing system developed when it did, who was responsible for its development, and its effects. This should be a brief paragraph included with your timeline.

**4.** Identify other cultures that were influenced by this writing system.

**5.** One person from each period must appear on the timeline. This could be an inventor, writer, publisher, or political figure. Briefly describe this individual's influence on and contribution to history as it relates to language and communication.

Include illustrations or models appropriate to the project. These visuals may be scanned photos, pictures from magazines, your own illustrations, or models of any appropriate artifacts from the period.

Include four inventions that have changed language and communication. Identify where they originated, who was responsible for their creation, and their impact.

Arrange the material on your timeline. Clearly label dates and be certain that you are consistent in your use of scale: equal distances on your timeline will always cover equal periods of time.

Use this sheet as a checklist for items. All timelines will be displayed and presented by the group to the class

# Theme 3 Traces of Belief: Making Values Tangible Through Word and Image

Symbolic representations of one's faith or images of saints or gods and goddesses help devotees remember teachings, focus their worship, and gain comfort. Images of people we admire and want to remember can serve a similar function.

Through images of both the bodhisattva Guanyin and Confucius, ***Traces of Belief*** offers students a chance to begin to appreciate the pluralism of beliefs of the Chinese as well as ways they have been able to harmonize seemingly conflicting ideas, particularly Confucianism and Daoism, two indigenous beliefs, along with Buddhism, which became preeminent in China during the first millennium C.E.

This unit allows students to examine not only what Confucius taught but also the ideas of some of the contemporary competing schools of thought and how they were later reconciled. Studying Guanyin's image, and the way this bodhisattva who "Hears the cries of the world" changed from a man to a woman as he/she traveled, illustrates how ideas travel and are adapted by different cultures.

The background essay, **"Chinese Belief Systems: From Past to Present and Present to Past,"** briefly summarizes various Chinese beliefs including ancestral rites and divination, Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, as well as belief systems in China today. In looking closely at Guanyin, the first activity, **The Power of the Image,** asks students to consider symbolism, including ways of visually expressing sacred time and space as well as Buddhist values. The second activity, **A Sage of China,** introduces students to the basic teachings of Confucius.

**Portrait of the Bodhisattva Guanyin** (left)
Purportedly Tang dynasty (618–907), undated.
Woodcut illustration; traditionally attributed to Wu Daozi (689–759), probably Ming (1368–1644) or Qing (1644–1911) dynasty.
Hanging scroll, ink rubbed on paper, 109.1 x 54.9 cm.
Date of rubbing unknown, Qing dynasty.

**Portrait of Confucius** (right)
Purportedly Tang dynasty (618–907), undated. Attributed to Wu Daozi (689–759). Hanging scroll, ink rubbed on 2 joined sheets of paper, 194.0 x 62.1 cm. Date of rubbing unknown.

## Introductory Questions

- These two images are rubbings. After the original paintings were executed, someone traced the lines in a woodcut, then applied ink, and laid the paper on top to create a rubbing. What are the advantages of this method?
- What are the similarities in the way these two figures are presented?
- What are the differences in presentation?
- What does each figure appear to be feeling?

• Do you feel one or the other is more approachable? Why?
• Both of these images are thought by some to be by the famous Tang painter Wu Daozi, known for his use of dynamic, fluid line. Do you think one image looks more dynamic and fluid than the other?
• Would an artist in China be likely to paint both a Confucian and a Buddhist image? (See background essay.)

Background Essay

# Chinese Belief Systems: From Past to Present and Present to Past

Geoff E. Foy

"Belief systems" refers to how people think and behave, philosophically and religiously. Key Chinese practices this essay will cover are ancestral *rites* and *divination*, the teachings of the philosophers Confucius and Laozi, and Buddhism. In understanding the various Chinese belief systems, it's important not to take terms at face value; the word "religion" (*zongjiao*), for example, did not even exist in the Chinese lexicon until the nineteenth century. Appreciating the complexity of this rich and enduring culture is crucial to understanding the beliefs that have helped to shape China's behavior and history.

*Rites*
A set way of acting or speaking during a ceremony.

*Divination*
The practice of predicting the future using omens or supernatural powers.

## Ancestral Rites and Divination

(Shang and Zhou Dynasties, ca. 1600–256 B.C.E.)

Two practices that extend from these ancient dynasties to the present are ancestral rites, performed in conjunction with the ancestral cult, and divination. Although they are not unique to Chinese culture–Romans and Hebrews also revered their ancestors and used divination to discern the workings of the supernatural world–both have outlived many other belief systems. Moreover, for the Chinese today, the veneration of the dead constitutes a meeting ground for past, present, and future as well as for different belief systems, such as Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism.

The ancestral cult was based on five key premises. First was the belief that the world was divided into three tiers: heaven, earth, and the underworld. The three levels, though distinct, were viewed as an interconnected reality. Second was the importance of lineage. A Chinese family was connected not only to their fathers and mothers of the recent past but those from the distant past. A common belief of the time was that every family traced its origin to Huang Di (the Yellow Emperor), the mythological progenitor of the Han people. The lineage system was vital for answering questions about origin and identity.

The third premise stated that the human body had two souls: the soul that ascends at death, the *hun*, and the one that stays with the corpse, the *po*. The *hun* eventually becomes a spirit (*shen*), while the *po* becomes a ghost (*gui*). The two-soul theory confirmed the multilayered reality in which the Chinese lived.

*Filial*
Proper behavior for a person, especially a son or daughter.

Fourth was the offering of sacrifices to their counterparts in heaven to show *filial* respect (*xiao*) and procure favors for the maintenance of the middle realm, earth. Generally sacrifice (*ji*) refers to gifts of wine and meat to a spirit that was in human form or an object in nature, such as a mountain, tree, or river. The most important–at least to the elite–were the rites performed by kings and, later, emperors. Provided these rituals were done correctly, the kingdom was assured of a prosperous year or the abatement of a calamity, such as a famine. Mistakes might lead to natural disasters and threaten the ruler's throne.

Ancestral rites also were performed at the local and familial levels. It was common then, as it is today, to find ancestral temples and shrines in towns and villages dedicated to individuals, who became deities through legends surrounding their lives and deaths. In most homes there was an altar for wood plaques or paper with the names of deceased relatives.

*Shaman*
A priest or priestess who uses magic for the purpose of curing the sick, predicting the future, and controlling events.

The fifth feature of the ancestral cult embodied the roles played by mediators, such as *shamans* (*wu*) and ritual specialists or priests (*zhu*). Both the shaman and the ritual specialist could recognize the signs of a cosmos in or out of balance and the methods required to ensure harmony. Kings and male heads of families also were considered mediators; however, shamans and priests had more expertise in the arts of divination and performance of rites, and they were often recruited for services at both the royal and local levels. When ministering to the newly deceased, in particular, shamans and priests were called upon to perform certain rituals, including divination, to assure proper burial and treatment of the *hun* and *po* souls.

Divination, the art of using omens or magic powers to discern movements in the supernatural world, has long been an important decision-making tool for the Chinese. Whether it means consulting inscriptions on animal bones or tortoiseshells (see the Shang Oracle Bone in Section 2, ***Traces of Ideas***) during the Shang and Zhou periods or using wood blocks to learn the response of an ancestor or deity in modern temples and homes, negotiating the three levels of heaven, earth, and the underworld through divination constitutes a point of continuity in Chinese religious culture.

### Confucius

(Kongzi, or "Master Kong," ca. 551–479 B.C.E.)

Confucius lived in China during the latter half of the Zhou dynasty (eleventh century–256 B.C.E.). As a philosopher and teacher, Master Kong influences far more people today through classic writings, such as the *Analects* (*Lunyu*), than he did during his lifetime. He created a philosophy that later became a major influence in the organization of Imperial Age China and was adopted and modified in other countries such as Korea, Japan, and Vietnam.

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Confucius emphasized principles for self-guidance. The key to producing a harmonious life, he wrote, is in how we treat others–our ancestors, leaders, parents, spouses, neighbors, and friends. The foundation for harmonious relationships is found in the principles of *ren* (benevolence), *li* (ritual/ceremony, often rendered as propriety/politeness), *shu* (reciprocity–"Do unto others . . ."), and *xiao* (filial piety–showing respect for one's elders).

Two other concepts that were predominant in Confucius's worldview were *Tian* (Heaven) and *Dao* (Way). His heaven represented a celestial power connected with the will of mighty ancestors, such as the widely known Yao, Shun, and Yü. The Way, on the other hand, constituted a natural path for humanity. Whereas Heaven emphasized choice, the Way required a yielding heart-mind (*xin*); both were crucial for achieving harmony in the earthly realm.

**Laozi**
("Old Master," sixth or third century B.C.E.)
The concept of *Dao* is more often associated with the figure Laozi and the classic *Dao de Jing* (The Book of the Way and Its Power) than with Confucius. It is not certain whether they were contemporaries. Their philosophies, though, are like two sides of a coin. Laozi emphasized harmony with the Dao–a referent to something that cannot be named–in order to achieve balance in life. To assist this process, Laozi taught his followers the concepts of non-action (*wuwei*) and shade and light (*yin/yang–primordial*, dynamic balancing of opposites). The principle of non-action meant that one should discern the natural course of things and cooperate with that movement. Thus, if a person was good at making clothes, he or she shouldn't become a cook. The concept of *yin/yang* reminded Laozi's students to look for the balancing forces of opposites and learn how to cooperate with and embody them. The teachings of Laozi and Confucius were not incorporated into a religious movement until the Han dynasty (206 B.C.E.–220 C.E.). The result was a mix of philosophy and religion. Over the centuries that followed, both Confucianism (*Rujiao*—the teachings of the scholars) and Daoism (*Daojiao*—the teaching of the Way) developed elaborate rituals and sacred writings. To this day the philosophies of Laozi and Confucius, and the religious movements their lives and teachings inspired, exist in vibrant forms in Chinese, Korean, Japanese, and Vietnamese culture as well.

*Primordial*
Existing since the beginning of the world.

**Buddhism in China** (second century C.E.)
(*Fojiao*-the teaching of Buddha, the Enlightened One)
Buddhism, a cultural system of beliefs and practices based on principles of compassion and non-attachment, originated in the sixth century B.C.E. in what is today Nepal. It was brought to China by Buddhist monks from

India during the latter part of the Han dynasty (ca. 150 C.E.) and took over a century to become assimilated into Chinese culture.

One of the key forces of Buddhism's success was Daoism. To help the Chinese comprehend Buddhist concepts, Buddhists borrowed ideas from Daoism via the Chinese language. Both Buddhism and Daoism benefited from this exchange. Daoists expanded their ideas about the cosmos and ways to structure their monastic orders. Buddhists gained a lexicon that made it easier to teach their tradition.

Over time Buddhism became a popular force in the lives of the Chinese, from the common people to the emperor himself. In fact, by the sixth century, Buddhism rivaled Daoism in popularity and political influence. It was during this time, and over the course of the next three centuries, that major schools of Chinese Buddhism formed. Two schools that retain their influence today are Pure Land Buddhism and Chan (Zen) Buddhism. Even in mainland China, where religion is often suppressed by the government, there are practitioners of these two schools of Chinese Buddhism.

Buddhism in China–as is the case with religious Daoism and Confucianism–also underwent many changes throughout the country's history and was varied in its social and religious manifestations and philosophical beliefs. Most scholars think of Buddhism as many Buddhisms. In the so-called classical period of Buddhism in China (Tang dynasty, 618–907 C.E.), there were a number of schools of Buddhism that taught and promoted their own philosophies and meditation practices. The Huayen and Tiantai schools, for instance, varied in philosophy, location, and political influence. The teachings of various schools influenced and were adapted by Korea and Japan.

One of the most popular figures in Chinese Buddhism is the Bodhisattva Guanyin (the one who perceives the laments of the world–Guanshiyin). Having originated from Indian Buddhism as a superior being who aids the suffering of the world, Guanyin has become a key figure in the devotional practices of Chinese Buddhists and Daoists alike.

**Popular Religion and Syncretism: The Present Reaching Back to the Past**

Popular, or folk, religious practice in China today has elements as old as the ancestral rites of the Shang and Zhou dynasties and, dating from the Song dynasty (960–1279 C.E.), is marked by a propensity for syncretism–the combining of different forms of belief or practice. A good example is the construction of temple altars. It's not uncommon to find Buddhist and Confucian figures in a Daoist temple. Nor is it extraordinary to see a self-professed Buddhist offer incense at a Daoist temple to a historical figure known for his Confucian virtues.

For most people in China, there is no problem with mixing religious

practices. Unlike some other cultures, where religious syncretism and even tolerance are viewed with skepticism or condemnation, the Chinese have always had the ability to select the religious practices and teachings that work best for them at the moment. If a certain deity doesn't answer a *supplicant*'s petition, then it's on to the next temple and deity. In general religious pluralism simply adds to the many options from which the Chinese can choose on their journey toward a harmonious life.

*Supplicant*
A person who prays to a deity.

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**Suggested further readings:**

*General Chinese History*
Cotterell, Arthur. *China: A Cultural History.* New York: Mentor, 1990.

Gernet, Jacques. *A History of Chinese Civilization.* Cambridge, England, and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982.

*Chinese Religions*
Ching, Julia. *Chinese Religions.* Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993.

Wolf, Arthur P., ed. *Religion and Ritual in Chinese Society.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974.

*Confucianism (In addition to the Confucian classics, e.g.,* The Analects, *etc.)*
Tu, Wei-ming. *Centrality and Commonality: An Essay on Confucian Religiousness.* Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989.

Wu, Pei-yu. *The Confucian's Progress: Autobiographical Writings in Traditional China.* Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990.

*Daoism (in addition to the classics* Dao De Jing *and the writings of Zhuangzi)*
Saso, Michael. *Blue Dragon, White Dragon: Taoist Rites of Passage.* Washington, D.C.: The Taoist Center, 1990.

*Buddhism*
Ch'en, Kenneth. *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Kitagawa, Joseph M. and Mark D. Cummings, eds. *Buddhism and Asian History (Religion, History, and Culture: Readings from the Encyclopedia of Religion).* New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987.

# Activity 3.1 The Power of the Image

**Performance Objectives** Students examine an image of compassion in the Buddhist tradition, analyzing components of the concept, then produce their own image of compassion through art.

**Grade Level** 3–8

**Essential Questions**
How do symbols function in an image?
Why is knowledge of a culture's symbolic language important to understanding an image?
How are abstract ideas shown in visual images?

**Standards**

**Social Studies**
*World History*
- Studying about different world cultures and civilizations, focusing on their accomplishments, contributions, values, beliefs, and traditions
- Exploring the lifestyles, beliefs, traditions, rules and laws, and social/cultural needs and wants of people during different periods in history and in different parts of the world
- Viewing historic events through the eyes of those who were there, as shown in their art, writing, music, and artifacts

**Visual Arts**
- Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matters, symbols, and ideas
- Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures

**Time Required** One class period

**Materials**
Photocopies of the ***Portrait of the Bodhisattva Guanyin*** and **Introductory Questions** from the beginning of this section or the ***Visible Traces*** poster
Photocopies of the **Iconography for the Portrait of the Bodhisattva Guanyin** handout
Colored markers/colored pencils/crayons
Sculpting clay
Paper

**Assessment Piece** Students' verbal responses; illustration

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Procedure

**1.** Many objects in ***Visible Traces*** represent the transmission of ideas through a written language. A bodhisattva is one who has achieved enlightenment but chooses to delay the rewards of nirvana, in order to help others achieve their own enlightenment. Distribute photocopies of the ***Portrait of the Bodhisattva Guanyin*** and discuss the **Introductory Questions**. This portrait of Guanyin, the bodhisattva associated with compassion and mercy, offers a vivid example of how ideas and doctrines are communicated and shared through images. Continue the dialogue with students by asking them how the concept of compassion is represented in this rubbing. Point out that this is not a fixed representation of the goddess. It is believed that there are as many as thirty-three different images of Guanyin—both male and female, young and old—in Chinese iconography.

**2.** As a class, make a list on the blackboard of features that students see in the image. (plants, waves, a child, circles behind the heads of Guanyin and the child, and so forth) Explain that in art, some features are universal, meaning that they can be readily understood by anyone, whereas others are specific to a particular culture.

**3.** Distribute the **Iconography for the Portrait of the Bodhisattva Guanyin** handout and see if, knowing the properties of some of the symbols in the image of Guanyin, students can guess their meaning.

**4.** How would students depict an abstract notion, such as compassion, freedom, or stability in an image? Ask students to include symbols from their own experience. Provide materials for creating drawings or sculptures.

**5.** Display the artworks and discuss the symbolism and treatment of abstract concepts.

# Handout Iconography for the Portrait of the Bodhisattva Guanyin

*Enlightenment*
The ultimate wisdom attained in Buddhism.

*Nirvana*
The Buddhist term for the ultimate release from earthly desires, and the attainment of disinterested compassion and wisdom.

In Buddhism, a bodhisattva is one who has attained *enlightenment* but chooses to delay the rewards of *nirvana.* Instead, he or she helps ordinary people reach enlightenment more easily and quickly. The wise and compassionate bodhisattva known as Avalokitesvara in Sanskrit, and Guanyin in China, was frequently prayed to for assistance.

Iconography is the reading of symbols in a painting or sculpture. Be an art detective and use the clues below to read the picture of Guanyin.

Bamboo: Bamboo has hollow stalks, which allow it to bend and endure heavy winds. It is a symbol commonly used in Chinese painting. Given its properties, what might bamboo symbolize?

Guanyin floating on water: Guanyin is standing on a lotus leaf. Rooted at the bottom of a pond, the lotus surfaces on muddy water to flower. It is an important symbol in Buddhism. How might it be interpreted?

The child next to Guanyin: He is the boy pilgrim Sudhana (Shancai in Chinese). According to the Garland Sutra, Sudhana visits fifty-three teachers to learn about the teachings of Buddhism. Guanyin is the twenty-eighth. Why is he prominent in this image?

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The circles behind the heads of Guanyin and Sudhana: These are mandalas. *Mandala* is a Sanskrit (an ancient Indic language that is the classical language of India) word that literally means "circle." In Buddhism it signifies meditation through which enlightenment is often achieved. In some schools of Buddhism, one can achieve enlightenment quickly by appealing to a bodhisattva. Why might Guanyin and Sudhana have mandalas behind their heads?

What other cultures depict religious figures with circles behind their heads? What about these representations and their symbolism is similar to the mandalas in this image? What is different?

The notion of compassion: Guanyin is associated with compassion. How is compassion conveyed in this image?

# Activity 3.2 A Sage of China

**Performance Objectives** Students read, analyze, and paraphrase translations from The Analects as a means of understanding key elements of Confucianism.

**Grade Level** 6–8

**Variation Grade Level** 9–12

**Essential Questions** What do the sayings attributed to Confucius tell us about the values inherent in Confucianism?
In these sayings, what is specific to Zhou China and what is universal?

**Standards**

**Social Studies**

*World History*

- Explaining the importance of analyzing narratives drawn from different times and places to understand historical events
- Investigating key events and developments and major turning points in world history to identify the factors that brought them about as well as their long-term effects
- Examining the social/cultural, political, economic, and religious norms and values of Western and other world cultures
- Interpreting and analyzing documents and artifacts related to significant developments and events in world history

*Civics, Citizenship, and Government*

- Analyzing how the values of a nation and international organizations affect the guarantee of human rights and provide for human needs

**Language Arts**

*Language for Critical Analysis and Evaluation*

- Analyzing oral and written texts in terms of the evidence, attitudes, and assumptions they convey, identifying, for example, significant ideas , whether stated, implied, or omitted, and means of emphasizing particular interpretations
- Approaching with useful linguistic and interpretive strategies the reading of texts across topic areas—including those that are densely written or visually forbidding.

**Time Required** One class period for work with handout; writing assignments may require one class period of editing and revising rough drafts, and a final class period will be needed to share papers

**Materials**
Sayings of Confucius handout
Writing materials for essay
Photocopies of the ***Portrait of Confucius*** and **Introductory Questions** from the beginning of this section or the ***Visible Traces*** poster.
Board and chalk to record translations
Colored markers
Paper banners (cut standard 8 1/2 x 11 sheets of paper in half lengthwise; tape together, end to end, to create banners)
Tape

**Procedure**
**1.** No doubt students have heard of Confucius and his wise sayings. Canvass the class for typical phrases attributed to Confucius.
**2.** Have students read the **Sayings of Confucius** handout.
**3.** Have students work individually or in pairs, to translate the phrases into their own words or work through the sayings as a class, recording inter pretations on the board as they are given.
**4.** Discuss students' interpretations and how they think Confucius's philosophies apply to life today.
**5.** Have students make banners or bumper stickers of a saying in their own words.
**6.** Looking at the ***Portrait of Confucius***, discuss with the class the **Introductory Questions**. Further discuss the following in relation to the ***Portrait of Confucius*** by asking students the following questions:
What is Confucius wearing in this portrait?
Is he characterized as particularly handsome?
Does he look proud or humble? Why?
Does this representation seem to embody the idea of wisdom? Why?

**Extension** Have students generate a fable leading to a moral that highlights one of the sayings on the handout. Share fables with the class, emphasizing the elements of Confucianism reflected therein.

**Variation for Grades 9–12** Ask students to do further research on the sayings of Confucius and choose one to write about in a position paper. Students should defend the statement they write about and use specific examples to support their position. Confucius had a great deal to say about both the rights and responsibilities of individuals and society. You may choose to narrow the paper topic by assigning an analysis of human rights according to Confucius.

# Handout Sayings of Confucius

*Note: Numbers indicate chapter and verse where the saying is found in* The Analects.

**5:5** Wealth and rank are what men desire, but unless they be obtained in the right way they may not be possessed. Poverty and obscurity are what men detest; but unless prosperity be brought about in the right way, they are not to be abandoned. If a man of honor forsakes virtue how is he to fulfil the obligations of his name? A man of honor never disregards virtue, even for the space of a single meal. In moments of haste he cleaves to it; in seasons of peril he cleaves to it.

**5:11** What I do not wish others to do to me, that also I wish not to do to them.

**15:20** The noble man seeks what he wants in himself; the inferior man seeks it from others.

**11:11** While still unable to do your duty to the living, how can you do your duty to the dead? Not yet understanding life, how can you understand death?

**2:15** Learning without thinking is useless. Thinking without learning is dangerous.

**2:17** Shall I teach you the meaning of knowledge? When you know a thing to recognize that you know it; and when you do not, to know that you do not know—that is knowledge.

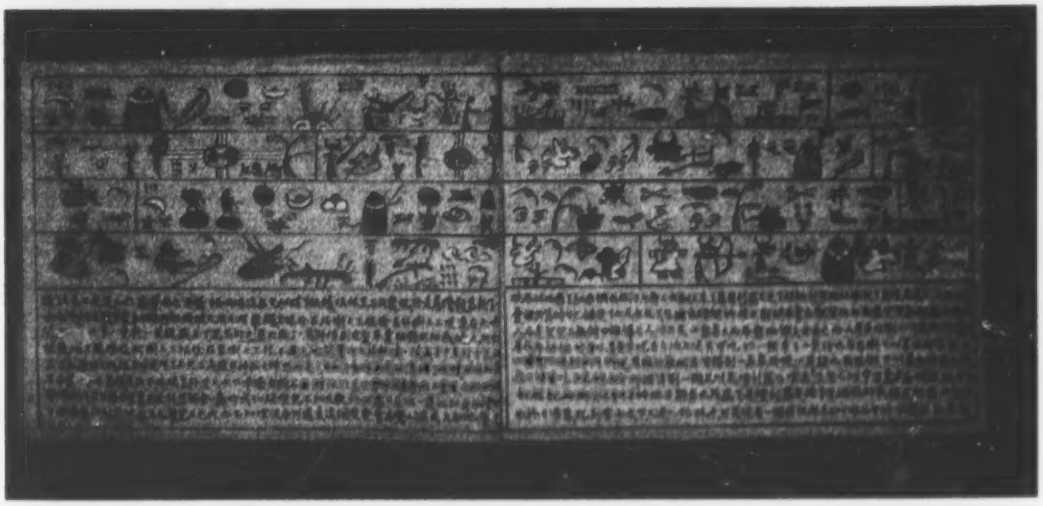
**15:38** In teaching there should be no class distinctions.

Source Confucius. *The Analects.* Translated by William Edward Soothill. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1995.

# Theme 4 Traces of Identity: Reflecting Diversity Through Language and Writing

Multiculturalism is not a new phenomenon. Ever since the first cities and kingdoms, diverse peoples have tried to communicate with one another, and leaders have had to figure out ways to integrate them. One strategy is to establish a common language. Another is to use several different languages. Chinese encompasses seven different languages and numerous dialects. The system of writing, using characters rather than letters, provided a means of communication for literate people throughout the country. Yet China also encompasses non-Han peoples who speak languages that are fundamentally different from Chinese. Language has become a way of exerting power and solidifying a group's identity.

The visuals introduced in ***Traces of Identity*** show how language reflects and even plays an active role in diversity. They also reinforce the idea of China's ethnic diversity because four different scripts are used. The background essay, **"Ethnic Minorities in China,"** introduces four different minorities in China: the Mongols, Tibetans, Manchus, and Naxi. The first activity, **Discovering Pictographs,** explores the pictographic writing system of the Naxi and shows how this unique writing system helps to maintain the group's identity. The second activity, **Exploring Multiple Language Use,** looks at the reasons for and effects of multiple language use.



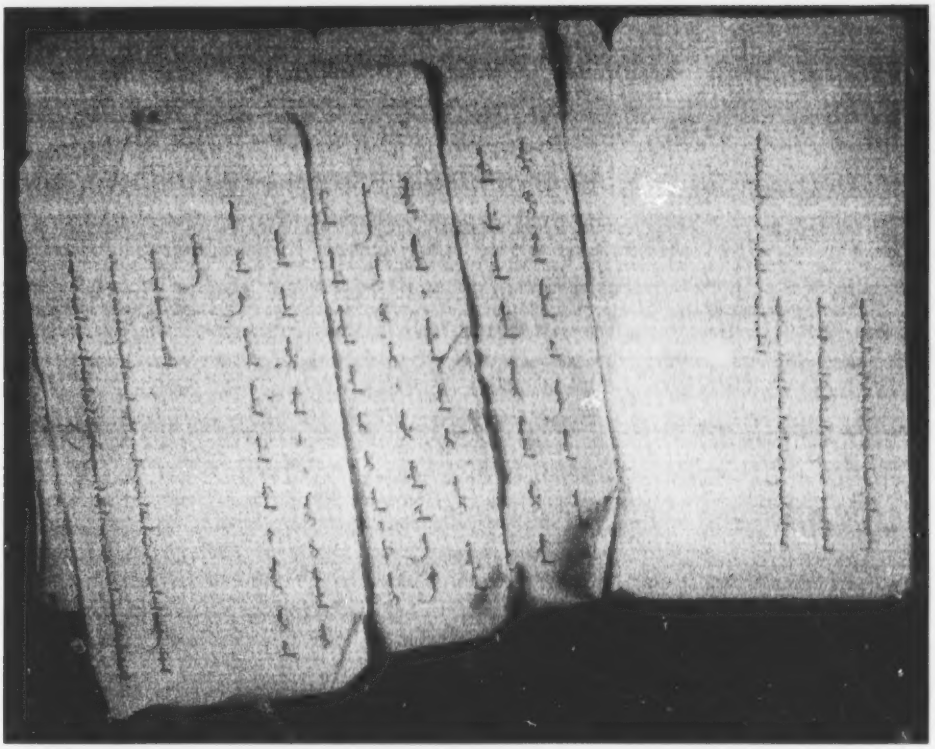
***Annals of Creation* in Pictographic Script with Accompanying Translation in Chinese**
People's Republic (1949–present), dated 1950.
Manuscript of 18 double leaves, ink and color on paper; each leaf approximately 20.1 x 28.0 cm.
Naxi pictographic script on upper register of each leaf.
Chinese translation on lower register.

This text was written in 1950 by the Naxi in southwestern China. There are fewer than 300,000 Naxi people, most living in Yunnan province in southwestern China. From the eleventh to thirteenth centuries, they dominated the region. However, when the Mongol armies arrived in 1253, the Naxi were quick to submit to their authority. From that time onward, they ruled southwestern China on behalf of whatever imperial dynasty was in power in Beijing.

Naxi religious leaders, called Dongba, have long used a unique form of picture writing to record the stories and myths central to their religious teachings. This script, known as Dongba writing and said to have been invented by King Moubao Azong in the thirteenth century, is made up of tiny stylized drawings of people, animals, and plants representing concepts instead of sounds or words. A system of Roman letters recently has been developed for the Naxi language, providing a more efficient method of writing. However, the Dongba script continues to be a powerful symbol of Naxi ethnicity.

## Introductory Questions

- Which writing would you guess is pictographic? Why?
- Can you guess what some of the pictographs might stand for?
- The Naxi are the only people who currently use a pictographic script. Why do you think most people do not?
- What might be the advantages of a pictographic script?
- This text is the ***Annals of Creation***, one of the Naxi's three great epic poems that explain the origins of the world and the Naxi people. Why might the Naxi feel strongly about using pictographic Dongba script for this?
- This document is also translated into Chinese. Why might this be?



**Palace Memorial in Manchu and Chinese Scripts**
Qing dynasty (1644–1911), Qianlong period (1736–1795), dated 1760.
Composed by Zhuang Yougong (jinshi of 1739; d. 1767).
Document with 21 accordion-style folds; overall dimensions of document completely unfolded, 23.5 x 247.8 cm; each leaf approx. 23.5 x 11.8 cm.

China was invaded by the Manchus, who established the Qing dynasty in 1644. Their rule lasted until 1911. Among the reasons for the success of the Manchu government were its adoption of many of the Chinese systems of government and administration and employment of many Chinese as civil servants in the government.

## Introductory Questions

- Would it be useful to have official documents in Chinese, Manchu, or both?
- Would it sometimes be advantageous to use only Manchu? Why?

Background Essay

# Ethnic Minorities in China: The Mongols, Tibetans, Manchus, and Naxi

Keith Dede

China is a country of immense diversity in terrain, climate, and especially people. There are 56 officially recognized ethnic groups. The largest is the Han Chinese, numbering 900 million, who reside in every region of the country. The smallest group is the Hezhen, living in the far northeast, with fewer than 2,000 people. This essay introduces four groups—Mongols, Tibetans, the Manchus, and the Naxi—whose writings are in the Beijing National Library. It is important to note that China, like many places in the world, faces challenges about how to reconcile national borders with ethnic ones. Precisely when and how regions such as Mongolia and Tibet came to be part of China are points that are disputed by groups both within and outside of China. The arguments surrounding these debates are very complex, with groups invoking history in different ways to legitimize their opposing stances.

## Mongols

Western images of Mongols often depict horse-riding nomads, living in *yurts*, or tents, and following their herds of sheep, horses, and cattle over the grassy plains of central Asia. Like the American cowboy, Mongols embody the pastoral image of free-spirited people living in harmony with their animals and the environment. There is a grain of truth to this stereotype. Some Mongol people make their living tending herds of animals and moving with the seasons, a practice known as nomadic *pastoralism.* However, this image does not capture the diversity found among Mongol people. There are sedentary farmers raising corn, wheat, oats, chickens, and pigs. Still other Mongol people combine aspects of nomadic pastoralism with *sedentary* agriculture. One family may divide the tasks among different members, with some moving to the *steppes* and tending the family herds, while others stay on the farm to raise crops. There are also Mongol doctors, lawyers, politicians, and professors. Some Mongols live in large cities, trading in stocks and bonds on international markets and designing Web pages. In short Mongols are as varied as any peoples in the world today.

*Yurt*
A circular domed tent of skins or felt stretched over a frame that can be collapsed.

*Pastoral*
A rural life, usually associated with people raising animals. It is often used to mean a calm life, in contrast to the bustling life of a city.

*Sedentary*
Staying in one place.

*Steppes*
A large area of land that is usually flat, dry and treeless.

There are three primary means of determining Mongol identity. They are history, language (written and spoken), and religion. Starting in 1206 C.E.,

led by the great Chingis Khan, Mongol armies spread out over Asia. By 1275, under Chingis's grandson, Khubilai Khan, the Mongols had established the largest land-based empire in the history of the world, stretching from Korea to southern China, through central Asia and what is now Russia. Mongol rule was established in Persia (today Iran), and, for a brief time, Mongol armies occupied parts of Eastern Europe, near what is now Poland and Hungary.

As this empire expanded from its core area in Mongolia, it stationed armies in various places throughout Asia. The descendants of those forces now reside as far south as Yunnan (in southwestern China), as far north as Lake Baikal in Russia (the Buriats), as far west as southwestern Russia (the Kalmyks), Afghanistan (the Moghols) and Xinjiang (the Oirats), and of course, in the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region in China and Mongolia. Though these groups live thousands of miles apart, there is recognition of a common heritage going back to the thirteenth century. A common language also unites Mongols. All speak Mongolian, with minor linguistic differences, and use the same unique script. Written from top to bottom, left to right, the script was adapted in the thirteenth century from the Uighur script, when the expanding Mongol Empire needed a means to communicate. The People's Republic of Mongolia, what is now known as Mongolia, used the Cyrallic alphabet to write the Mongolian language while the country was under the influence of the Soviet Union. In recent times, however, attempts have been made to reintroduce the traditional script.

***Sutra of the Golden Radience of the Most Victorious Kings* in Mongolian Script**
Qing dynasty (1644–1911 C.E.), undated, ca. 18th century. Traslated from the Tibetan by Sesrab Senge (14th century) during the Yuan dynasty (1270–1368 C.E.). 151 folios between top and bottom carved wood sutra covers, and between top and bottom carved wood covers, approximately 17.0 x 63.7 x 13.7 cm.

Religion is another unifying force for Mongol society. Shortly after conquering most of Asia in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Mongols were introduced to Buddhism, particularly Tibetan Buddhism. Monasteries were established to serve the religious needs of their communities, and to this day, Buddhist monasteries in Mongol communities continue to teach the holy scriptures by means of the Mongol script. For the 3.5 million Mongols living in China today, there is much in their culture with which to identify. History, language, and religion interact with other cultural practices, such as music and art, to form a rich tapestry.

### Tibetans

Like Mongolia, Tibet was the center of a vast empire. Beginning in the seventh century, Tibetan armies moved north, east, and west from the area around the Yalu River in the region near present-day Lhasa. Within a few decades, they had conquered much of central Asia, including the important routes through Xinjiang used by China to trade with Western neighbors. In the eighth century the Tibetan Empire was the most feared political power in Asia. For a short period in 755, Tibetans even captured Chang'an, then

the capital of China, chasing the Chinese emperor and his court from the city. Internal disputes eventually divided the Tibetan Empire and the court's authority gave way to local leaders. However, there are lasting legacies of this imperial period. One is language. In modern China there are three dialect groups, all closely related to one another and descended from the language of the empire's armies. The first is Central Tibetan, spoken around Lhasa, in an area now called the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR). The second is Khams, spoken east of the TAR in Sichuan, Yunnan, and in some parts of Qinghai. The third dialect group is Amdo, spoken north of the TAR, in Qinghai, Sichuan, and Gansu provinces. Tibetan languages are also spoken in Nepal, Bhutan, and India. All of these linguistic varieties use the same written language, which is based on an alphabet invented in Tibet during the reign of Srong bstan Sgam po (627–650).

Another lasting legacy of imperial Tibet is Buddhism. The first Tibetan emperors invited Buddhist monks from India and China to teach the religion to courtiers and aristocrats. The emperors also sent learned men to India and China to gather Buddhist scriptures and translate them into Tibetan. The teachings of Buddhism took firm root, quickly permeating Tibetan society. Buddhism came to flourish in Tibet as it had nowhere else. One difference in the Buddhism of Tibet is the importance of the lama, or teacher, with whose assistance the disciple will reach spiritual enlightenment. Therefore, Tibetan Buddhism is sometimes referred to as Lamaism.

***Three Hundred Icons of Tibetan Lamaism***
Qing dynasty (1644–1911 C.E.), Qianlong period (1736–1795), undated
Attributed to Lcan-skya Qutytu Rol-p'ai-rdo-rje (1717-1786)
110 folios, each with perforations along top edge for binding with string, approximately 9.0

Monasteries play a key role in Tibetan society. As centers of religion, they not only minister to the spiritual needs of their lay communities but also preserve and propagate religious and scholarly traditions. In the case of Tibet, with a written history of over thirteen thousands years and thousands of religious texts, the scholarly tradition is of great significance.

In recent times Tibet's people and their culture have gained increasing attention as they wrestle with the problem of finding a political space in the rapidly changing modern world. There is concern over whether the nearly four million Tibetans living in China today will be able to hold onto their heritage and allow it to proliferate in the future.

### The Manchus

The Manchus offer a cautionary example of the importance of language as a means of preserving a people's heritage. While around 4.2 million Manchus live in China today, it's estimated that only around 50 individuals still speak the language. The vast majority speak and write Chinese. With the near extinction of the Manchu language, a great deal of culture has been lost.

The Manchus have a proud history. In 1644 they overran the Ming dynasty, which had ruled China for nearly three hundred years. Manchu

armies then gained control of present-day Mongolia, Xinjiang, and Tibet. The Manchus established a dynasty, called the Qing, which ruled much like a Chinese dynasty, with an extensive military and civilian bureaucracy. However, their empire included lands that no Chinese dynasty had ever controlled. By the eighteenth century, the Qing dynasty was the largest, richest, and most powerful empire in Asia and, possibly, the world.

From the beginning there were signs that the relatively small group of Manchus who were now rulers of China would be greatly changed by the experience of governing such a vast land. Originally, they looked to shamans—individuals who had a special relationship with the natural world—for religious guidance. Through trances, shamans communed with spirits who provided them with powers to heal the sick, rid an area of evil spirits, or see the future. Over time this practice largely gave way to Buddhism, Daoism, and the other religious traditions. Similarly, Manchu language gradually lost its place. At the beginning of the Qing dynasty, Manchu was used for all written documents at court. The writing system was modified from the Mongolian alphabet to fit the needs of the Manchu language. Many of the earliest scribes for the Manchu rulers were, in fact, Mongolians hired for their ability to write.

Over time it became court policy that all documents should be written in both Manchu and Chinese. Eventually fewer Manchu learned to write their own language. The emperor Qianlong, who ruled from 1736 to 1796, repeatedly ordered his courtiers to learn Manchu, suggesting that many were using Chinese exclusively. By the dynasty's end, in 1911, even the emperor could not read or write the Manchu language and probably did not speak it either. (See the **Palace Memorial in Manchu and Chinese Scripts** at the beginning of this section.)

### The Naxi

There are fewer than 300,000 Naxi people, most living in Yunnan province in China's southwest. Unlike the Mongols, Tibetans, and Manchus, the Naxi were never a political force of international importance. From the eleventh to thirteenth centuries, they were a regionally dominant people. However, when the Mongol armies arrived in 1253, the Naxi were quick to submit to their authority. From that time onward, they ruled southwest China on behalf of whatever imperial dynasty was in power in Beijing, from the Yuan dynasty, through the Ming and Qing dynasties.

Today the Naxi mostly occupy high mountain valleys and the foothills to the Himalayan plateau. Although it is a tropical region, the altitude makes the seasons generally mild. Most Naxi are farmers, growing grain and vegetables in the valleys. Some tend livestock, such as *yaks*, goats, and sheep,

*Yak*
A wild or tame ox that has long hair. It is native to Tibet and surrounding areas of central Asia.

in the mountain grasslands. The most important urban center of Naxi culture is Lijiang, a mid-sized town that is home to businesspeople, doctors, and artists. The Naxi language is distantly related to the Tibetan language. Naxi religious leaders, called Dongba, have long used a unique form of picture writing to record the stories and myths that are central to their religious teachings. This "script" is known as Dongba writing. A system of Roman letters has recently been developed for writing the Naxi language, providing a more efficient method. However, the Dongba script continues to be a powerful symbol of Naxi ethnicity. (See the Annals of Creation in Dongba Script at the beginning of this section.)

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# Activity 4.1 Discovering Pictographs

**Performance Objectives**

Language can be a window through which cultural identity can be glimpsed. It can play a key role in defining and maintaining cultural identity. Students will use the Naxi pictographic script to generate and translate stories, exploring the advantages, challenges, and unique qualities of this writing system.

**Grade Level**

K–12 (easily adaptable to all)

**Essential Questions**

What role does language play in relation to cultural identity?
How does the language of the Naxi reflect their complex history as a group?

**Standards**

**Social Studies**

*World History*

- Knowing the social and economic characteristics, such as customs, traditions, child-rearing practices, ways of making a living, education and socialization practices, gender roles, roots, and religious and spiritual beliefs, that distinguish different cultures and civilizations
- Knowing some important historic events and developments of past civilizations
- Interpreting and analyzing documents and artifacts related to significant developments and events in world history
- Investigating the roles and contributions of individuals and groups in relation to key social, political, cultural, and religious practices spanning world history
- Viewing history through the eyes of those who witnessed key events and developments by analyzing their literature, diary accounts, letters, artifacts, art, music, architectural drawings, and other documents
- Investigating important events and developments in world history by posing analytical questions, selecting relevant data, distinguishing fact from opinion, hypothesizing cause-and-effect relationships, testing hypotheses, and forming conclusions

**Language Arts**

*Language for Information and Understanding*

- Listening to or reading an account of how something is done and then incorporating those techniques into their own work
- Following directions that involve a series of actions

*Language for Social Interaction*

- Listening attentively to others and building on their ideas in conversations of general interest to peers and adults
- Expressing their ideas and concerns clearly and respectfully in conversations and group discussions

**Time Required** One class period to review artifacts and write stories; one class to share and discuss

**Materials** Photocopies of **Dongba Texts of the Naxi People** and **Introductory Questions** at the beginning of this section or the ***Visible Traces*** poster
Paper and writing materials (pencils and/or colored pencils)

**Assessment Piece** Pictographic stories, translations, oral presentations

**Procedure**

**1.** Review Dongba texts, handing out photocopies of **Dongba Texts of the Naxi People.** Discuss the **Introductory Questions** as a class.
**2.** Have students work individually or in pairs to generate a one-page story using pictographs of their own design.
**3.** When students have completed their stories, have them exchange pictograph renditions and offer a translation of each others' stories.
**4.** Return pictographs to their owners. Present the stories and have the translators describe their interpretations.
**5.** As a class, discuss the following questions:
What were the advantages of writing in pictographs?
What were the challenges and limitations?
Were the translators correct? If they had been looking at a phonetic-based language, would they have been more or less correct without knowledge of the system?
How might the use of this kind of writing system be important as a means of identifying a people?
How does this kind of writing system influence the way people share ideas?

**Extensions** Using pictographs, older students might make journal entries for several days to further explore their advantages and limitations.

Have students compare Naxi pictographs to signs used to communicate stories of rulers, gods, and historical events in other cultures, such as Egyptian hieroglyphics. How are the signs similar? How are they different?

# Activity 4.2 Exploring Multiple Language Use

**Performance Objectives** Students will explore the reasons that government documents were written in both Manchu and Chinese during the Qing dynasty (1644–1919). They will also examine reasons that multiple languages are used in their own environments. Further, they will consider the consequences of understanding and controlling a culture's language.

**Grade Level** K–12 (easily adaptable to all)

**Essential Questions** How did the Manchus use bilingualism to control China?
How and why is bilingualism practiced today by different cultures?
How and why are symbols sometimes used to replace an alphabet-based writing system?

**Standards** **Social Studies**

*World History*

- Defining culture and civilization, explaining how they developed and changed over time
- Investigating the various components of cultures and civilizations, including social customs, norms, values, and traditions; political systems; economic systems; religions and spiritual beliefs; and socialization or education practices
- Knowing the social and economic characteristics, such as customs, traditions, child-rearing practices, ways of making a living, education and socialization practices, gender roles, roots, and religious and spiritual beliefs, that distinguish different cultures and civilizations
- Knowing important historic events and developments of past civilizations
- Interpreting and analyzing documents and artifacts related to significant developments and events in world history
- Investigating the roles and contributions of individuals and groups in relation to key social, political, cultural, and religious practices spanning world history
- Viewing history through the eyes of those who witnessed key events and developments by analyzing their literature, diary accounts, letters, artifacts, art, music, architectural drawings, and other documents
- Investigating important events and developments in world history by posing analytical questions, selecting relevant data, distinguishing fact from

opinion, hypothesizing cause-and-effect relationships, testing hypotheses, and forming conclusions

**Language Arts**

*Language for Information and Understanding*

- Following directions that involve a series of actions
- Obtaining essential information from printed and nonprinted materials on academic and applied topics and drawing connections among strands of information, making distinctions concerning the relative significance of specific data, facts, and ideas
- Preparing oral and written presentations, supporting decisions about interpretations and the relative significance of information with explicit statement, evidence, and appropriate argument

*Language for Social Interaction*

- Engaging in conversations and discussions relating to academic, technical, and community subjects, anticipating what listeners will need to know to understand an idea and structuring conversations and discussions to provide that information
- Listening attentively to others and building on their ideas in conversations of general interest to peers and adults
- Expressing their thoughts and views clearly with attention to the perspectives and voiced concerns of the listener or audience

**Time Required** One class period

**Materials** Photocopies of the **Palace Memorial in Manchu and Chinese Scripts** and **Introductory Questions** at the beginning of this section or the ***Visible Traces*** poster
Paper and pencils
Chalk and board

**Assessment Piece** Student records of multiple language use, discussion

**Procedure**

**1.** Examine the **Palace Memorial in Manchu and Chinese Scripts** and discuss **Introductory Questions** with students. Discuss why they were executed in two languages. Ask students: What are the consequences of not understanding everyday written language? Have students consider how information is provided in more than one language in their environment.

**2.** Write the following questions on the board:

Where do you find examples of the use of more than one language?
Why are things written in more than one language?
In what instances are symbols, rather than language, used?
Why are symbols used in these instances?

**3.** Divide the class into groups of three to five students. Have groups generate examples of types of information found in more than one language. They should note the purpose of these examples. Remind them that braille and sign language are also considered "languages." Symbols could include stop signs, danger warnings, or signs representing food or rest areas on highways.

**4.** Have students share their lists.

**5.** Have the class compare the use of bilingualism in ancient times with their modern examples. Ask students how the purposes might be similar or different from that of the **Palace Memorial**.

## Extensions

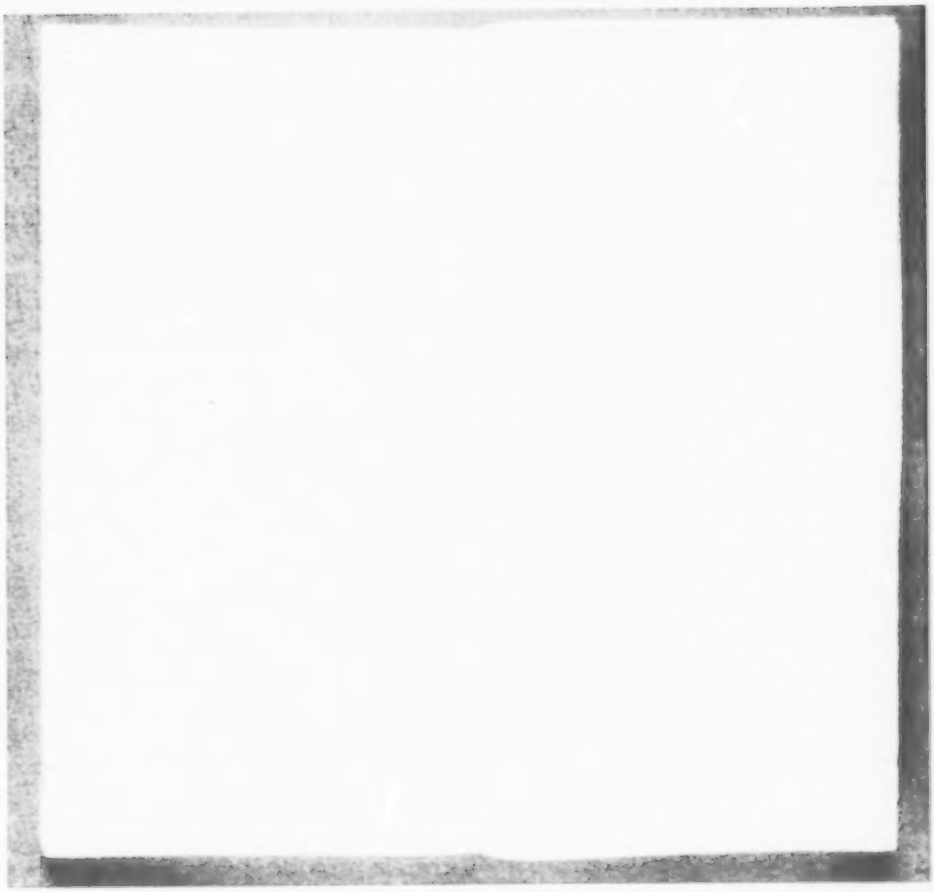
Have students produce a writing sample (elementary students, a paragraph; older students, a short essay) on what the consequences of not understanding the official language of one's country might be. Have them share what they write in class. Discuss the consequences of a limited number of people having access to the official language. Ask students how this might lead to power, prestige, or wealth. Have older students consider how technology provides communication opportunities that separate groups of people and their access to knowledge.

Have students collect further examples of bilingual communications over the course of several days, to be posted on a classroom bulletin board.

# Theme 5 Traces of the Self: Expressing Individuality Through Poetry and Calligraphy

How can you "paint a poem?" That's exactly what Chinese calligraphers tried to do. Writing expressed not only the meaning of the words but the inner feelings and personality of the writer, whose poem became a work of visual as well as textual beauty. Symbolizing the effort toward integration and harmony, written texts and paintings also tried to exemplify both Confucian and Daoist values.

***Traces of the Self*** introduces students to several beautiful Chinese poems and imparts the importance of calligraphy in Chinese life. The background essay, **"Writing as a Means to Express and Cultivate the Self,"** provides specific information about the poems students will be asked to consider and examines them in a historical context. The second essay, **"Chinese Calligraphy,"** not only explains how a calligrapher works but offers insight into how and why calligraphy has been so important. Explaining how a Chinese viewer looks at a work of calligraphy teaches us to do the same. The first activity, **Expressing the Self Through Word and Image,** asks students to analyze several poems carefully and then to translate them into paintings. Students are then asked to write their own poems and make paintings of them. The second activity, **The Expressive Brush,** leads students to look for examples of how writing, not what is written, carries meaning.



***The Exemplars of the Beautiful and the Refined in Tang Poetry***
Ming dynasty (1368–1644), Tianqi period (1621–1627).
Compiled and edited by Yang Zhaozni (17th century).
Wucheng, Zhejiang province; Wucheng Min Yishi, 1621.
8 columns per half folio; single-line borders; printed in black and red ink; overall dimensions of volumes: 30.0 x 18.2 cm.

English translation of poem from this manuscript:
From a swift horse prancing proudly through fallen petals,
He brushes his whip against a cloud-covered chariot.
A lovely woman, smiling, raises the pearl curtain—
"My home is there," she says, pointing off at a red tower.
–Translation by Professor Stephen Durrant

Introductory Questions
- What are the adjectives in this poem?
- Does the poet seem to be describing real or fantastic events?
- What might be lost in the translation from Chinese to English?

***Manual of Paintings by Famous Masters of the Successive Periods***
Ming dynasty (1368–1644), Wanli period (1573–1619).
Compiled by Gu Bing (fl. 1594–1603); proofread and edited by Xu Shuhui; engraved by Liu Gangxin.
Hulin (Hangzhou), Zhejiang province; Shuanggui tang, 1603.
White folding margin at center of folio; single-line borders; overall dimensions of volumes: 33.4 x 22.7 cm; block sizes of text: approx. 27.1 x 19.2 cm; block sizes of illustrations irregular; stitched binding.

## Introductory Questions

- In the example of calligraphy on the left, what materials did the calligrapher need?
- What materials did the artist need in order to create the painting on the left from the same book?
- Might these have been done by the same person?
- Do you think it would be possible to correct a mistake while one was writing or painting?
- Do you think that the same person could have done both the calligraphy and the painting?

Background Essay

# Writing as a Means to Express and Cultivate the Self

Kelly Ann Long

The written word—whether a single character, a poem, or a prose essay—played a key role in Chinese history and in the self-expression of the cultured individual. China's writing system extends back thousands of years to the beginnings of Shang civilization in the seventeenth century B.C.E., providing cultural continuity and links to the past. The appreciation and execution of poetry and calligraphy, and later painting, became the means by which the Chinese have understood and expressed themselves as individuals and as members of a society.

Confucius (551–479 B.C.E.) shaped the standards and texts that formed the foundation of Chinese scholarship, education, and artistic aspiration for centuries. His writings described the model ruler, a moral man who demonstrated proper behavior *(li)* and relationships with others *(jen)* and who thereby helped to create an orderly and good society. Confucius thought that every man should cultivate his own talents and seek to fulfill his potential by communing with others through the arts. By reading, writing, and practicing the arts, the superior man could elevate himself and give rise to virtuous self-expression.

Over time Confucian classics became the basis of the civil service examination system, which changed through the dynasties but provided a coherent fabric to Chinese life for centuries. These texts connected the scholar to his intellectual ancestors. Those who succeeded in the arduous civil exams were rewarded with positions in government. Yet, along with the study of policy and governmental tracts, these exams emphasized literary skills.

Years of education and examinations marked the journey to becoming a scholar-official. Typically only sons received formal education, which began at a very early age. A young boy practiced brushstrokes in a Confucian saying by copying over examples. Over time the student memorized thousands of characters in long passages from the classics. In addition he read commentaries upon the classics and modeled his own essays and poems upon them. This curriculum accomplished much more than mere literacy—it forged a moral rationale and instilled a shared set of personal values among scholar-officials.

Because training in the literary arts comprised such a large portion of the required learning, scholar-officials were often poets and gifted artists as well. It is no surprise that these educated elite, or literati as they were called,

gathered to appreciate the arts and one another's intellect. They formed communities of friends and cultivated their best inner character by sharing conversation, poetry, and art. In their writing the literati alluded to ancient sages, places, and poems to express themselves and the realities of their circumstances, making the past integral to their self-cultivation.

### Self-Cultivation Through Poetry

Poetry was considered the height of literary accomplishment for the Chinese scholar. From the time of Confucius, educated Chinese referenced, collected, and wrote poetry, embracing it as a crucial part of their lives.

Poetic forms differed through time and with regard to place. The earliest collection of poems, compiled around the sixth century B.C.E., is the *Shi Jing*, or the Book of Songs. These poetic forms were made of four-word verses and included folk songs as well as dynastic and court poems. Poetic forms continued to develop, and during the Han dynasty (206 B.C.E.–220 C.E.), *fu*, or prose poems, emerged. After the fall of the Han, the *shi* form, characterized by the repetition of the grammatical structure to express similar ideas, evolved from the four-word verse of the *Shi Jing*. This became one of the most recognizable and practiced styles of Chinese poetry. Poetic styles continued to evolve during the Tang dynasty (618–907 C.E.), often regarded as China's golden age of poetry. (See the ***Exemplars of the Beautiful and the Refined in Tang Poetry*** at the beginning of this section.) Many of the best-loved poets of China lived during this period, and new poetic styles emerged. During this time the literati were joined by emperors, Daoist hermits, Buddhist monks, and court ladies in revering and writing poetry. Moreover, the arts of painting, music, and poetry were integrated to create some of China's finest examples of artistic self-expression.

Tang poems evoke the mood, scene, and spirit of nature. Beautiful, natural surroundings were thought to produce people of strong character. A good Confucian, however, was obligated to serve in government and could not live a secluded life, wandering in nature. Yet he nourished his spirit by taking imaginary journeys through landscape paintings or descriptive poems. Many Tang poems describe brief moments of intense feeling caused by the sight of natural beauty. As in Chinese painting, where blank space has value, in Chinese poetry the unspoken also speaks. While the subject is often unstated in Chinese poetry, the poet infuses nature with a personality as a means of expressing his inner emotions, attributing them to the scene or thing being described.

*Monochrome*
A painting, drawing, or photograph in a single color.

An unparalleled master of these arts was Wang Wei (701–761 C.E.), whose ***monochrome*** landscapes are as well known and revered as his poems. Wang Wei was an official, yet it is not the record of his official acts but rather his poetry and painting that have left a lasting influence on China.

His style of landscape painting became a model for literati painters for over four hundred years. He believed that handwriting and painting should offer evidence not of one's skill with the brush but of one's quality as a person. He used choice expressions to create images within his poems, just as he used a few strokes of the brush to create his landscape paintings. A follower of Buddhism, his poems are said to evoke the sense of quiet, solitude, emptiness, and freedom from desire that correspond to Buddhist *doctrine.* His descriptive poems create strong pictorial effects, and he often depicted himself within scenes of nature. For example, the poet places himself in the poem "Bamboo Lodge."

*Doctrine*
A rule or idea that is part of a system of belief.

I sit alone in the dark bamboo grove,
Playing the *zither* and whistling long.
In this deep wood no one would know–
Only bright moon comes to shine.[1]

*Zither*
A stringed instrument with 30 to 40 strings over a piece of wood that is played horizontally with a pick.

A contemporary of Wang Wei, Li Bo (701–762 C.E.), wrote from a Daoist perspective, expressing his own thoughts and emotions as well as love of nature. His works celebrated friendship, nature, and solitude. He also wrote poems praising the qualities and expressing the laments of women he met during his travels. His style is bold, spontaneous, and original. One, "The Beautiful Woman of Yang Shang," is included in *Exemplars of the Beautiful and the Refined in Tang Poetry.*

From a swift horse prancing proudly through fallen petals,
He brushes his whip against a cloud-covered chariot.
A lovely woman, smiling, raises the pearl curtain–
"My home is there," she says, pointing off at a red tower.[2]

Li Bo's contemporary, Du Fu (712–776 C.E.), engaged in the world, using his talents to work for its betterment. Clearly the Confucian moralist, his well-regulated poems express concern, criticize social wrongs, rail against the senselessness of war, and voice compassion for the poor. He drew upon nature to evoke emotions as well as to comment indirectly upon events in his world. He is considered a social historian because his poems describe changes he personally experienced during a period of deterioration and war. Concerned with inequity, even though he was part of the scholar-official class, he was a true humanitarian in his compassion for his fellow man. In this way he exemplified the Confucian ideal of the cultivated man who

1. Wang Wei, translated by Liu, Wu-chi, *An Introduction to Chinese Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1966), p. 72

2. Translation by Professor Stephen Durrant.

serves to better society. His poetry reveals these aspects of his character.

*Vermilion*
A bright reddish orange color.

*Levied*
Something that is required by an authority, as taxes are required by the government.

Silk that was bestowed at the *vermilion* court
Came originally from some poor shivering women;
Their husbands were whipped and flogged
So that it could be *levied* as a tribute to the imperial city.

Inside the vermilion gate wine and meat are stinking:
On the roadside lie the bones of people frozen to death.[3]

Poetic forms continued to develop in the dynasties following the Tang. The form known as the *ci* was introduced during the Tang and was perfected and popularized during the Song dynasty (960–1279). Called "long and short verse" to describe its lines of varying length, it uses colloquial expressions and was originally written to be sung to the melody of popular tunes.

One of China's best known female poets, Li Qingchao (1081–1141 C.E.) lived during the Song dynasty. She wrote volumes of poems and essays in which she celebrated the joys of life and expressed intensely personal emotions about separation from her husband. He poems are unsurpassed in revealing the intimacy, delicacy, and immediacy of feeling evoked by life events.

Exceptional forms of poetry continued to emerge during the Yuan (1279–1368 C.E.), Ming (1368–1644 C.E.), and Qing (1644–1911 C.E.) dynasties, but the twentieth century witnessed a break with tradition. The exam system was abolished, and in the wake of the May 4th, 1919, student protests against provisions of the Treaty of Versailles granting Chinese territory to Japan, the *baihua wen* (clear speech, or vernacular) movement replaced the classical Chinese *wenyan wen* forms of writing. Regional dialects emerged in novels and short stories, many influenced by Western literary forms and topics. Poetry remained an important form of self-expression. As the communist movement spread across the mainland, socialist realism in the arts and literature became standard. The Maoist genre *(Mao wenti)* encouraged rigid, stock phrases and political tracts. Mao himself was an acclaimed poet, continuing the tradition of the politician-poet. A variety of movements emerged since his death. After the Open Policy of 1978, "scar literature" documented the Cultural Revolution, while New Realism focused on contemporary problems. The Misty Poetry groups used private imagery to make veiled political references. Nevertheless, links to the past continue. Poets such as Bei Dao, one of the most popular figures of the Misty Poetry group, still forms connections to the past. He writes poems with strong, pic-

3. Du Fu. "My Trip from the Capital to Feng-hsien." Translated by Wu-chi Liu. *An Introduction to Chinese Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1966), p.82

tographic qualities and thus continues the traditions of self-expression and cultivation through poetry.

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**Selected sources and suggested further readings:**

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Background Essay

# Chinese Calligraphy

Charles Lachman

Calligraphy, literally "beautiful writing," has been appreciated as an art form in many different cultures throughout the world, but the stature of calligraphy in Chinese culture is unmatched. In China, from a very early period, calligraphy was considered not just a form of decorative art; rather, it was viewed as the supreme visual art form, was more valued than painting and sculpture, and ranked alongside poetry as a means of self-expression and cultivation. How one wrote, in fact, was as important as what one wrote. To better understand how calligraphy came to occupy such a prominent position, it is necessary to consider a variety of factors, such as the materials used in calligraphy and the nature of the Chinese written script as well as the esteem in which writing and literacy are held in traditional China.

The earliest extant examples of Chinese writing are the inscriptions that appear on so-called oracle bones (animal bones and turtle shells—see the Shang Oracle Bone in Section 2, ***Traces of Ideas***) and on bronze vessels, the oldest of which date back to the Shang dynasty (ca.1600–ca.1100 B.C.E.). Shang kings used these objects in important divination rituals, and some scholars have argued that this early association of writing with ritual and political authority helps to account for the special status conferred upon those who could read and write.

These early inscriptions were made on the surface of an oracle bone or a bronze mold with a sharp, pointed instrument. As a result of this process, the characters (or "graphs" as they are also called) generally lack the kinds of linear variation and other attributes considered prerequisites of true calligraphy. Those qualities began to emerge very clearly during the Han dynasty (206 B.C.E.–220 C.E.), when Chinese artisans perfected the manufacture of the basic materials still used by calligraphers today: brush, ink, paper, and inkstone.

Although archaeological evidence confirms that brushes were known in China at a much earlier date, it was during the Han period that their use became widespread. A typical brush consists of a bundle of animal hairs (black rabbit hair, white goat hair, and yellow weasel hair were all very popular) pushed inside a tube of bamboo or wood (though jade, porcelain, and other materials were also occasionally used). The hairs are not all of the same length; rather, an inner core has shorter hairs around it, which in turn are covered by an outer layer that tapers to a point. Brushes come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes that determine the type of line produced. What

all such brushes have in common, however, is their flexibility. It is this feature more than any other that allows the calligraphic line to be so fluid and expressive.

The ink employed in calligraphy is usually made from lampblack, a sooty residue created by burning pine resin or oil underneath a hood. After being collected, the lampblack is mixed with glue and then pressed into molds. The resulting hardened cakes or sticks can then be ground against a stone and mixed with water, a process that allows the calligrapher to control the thickness of the ink and density of the pigment. Eventually ink cakes and ink sticks themselves became a decorative art form, and many well-known artists created designs and patterns for their molds.

The invention of paper is widely appreciated as one of China's major technological contributions to the world. Tradition credits the discovery of the process to Cai Lun in 105 C.E., though recent tomb findings demonstrate that paper was known at least a century earlier. Paper was made from various fibers, such as mulberry, hemp, and bamboo, and provided an inexpensive alternative to silk as a ground material for calligraphy and painting.

Together with the inkstone—a carved stone slab with a reservoir for grinding ink and mixing it with water—brush, ink, and paper are known in China as the Four Treasures of the Study (*wenfang sibao*), indicating the high esteem in which the materials of calligraphy are held. These Four Treasures are the same materials employed by traditional Chinese painters. Some critics have pointed to this as a way of explaining why calligraphy has a higher status in China than elsewhere. The argument goes something like this: In Europe, for instance, painting is a high art; calligraphy does not use the same materials as painting; therefore, calligraphy is not accorded the same high status as painting. In China painting and calligraphy use the same materials; therefore, calligraphy is considered to be a high art akin to painting.

The problem with this argument is its basis upon the unfounded assumption that painting in China, as in Europe, was the most valued visual art form. In fact painting in China practically from its inception was considered secondary to calligraphy as a visual art. Moreover the argument that painting and calligraphy share the same materials was used in the eleventh and twelfth centuries to elevate the status of painting, rather than the other way around.

In trying to understand why calligraphy came to occupy such a prominent position in China, it is useful to consider the features that were prized when calligraphy began to emerge as an art form distinct from mere writing; that is to say, when specimens of handwriting began to be valued, collected,

and treated as art. One of the earliest recorded instances concerns the first-century emperor Ming of the Han, who, upon hearing that his cousin was on his deathbed, dispatched a messenger to obtain a piece of his writing before he passed away. By so doing, Emperor Ming was hoping to be able to "commune" with his relative, even after death, through the traces of his personality embodied by his calligraphy.

More than any other factor, it is the claim that calligraphy can serve as a medium of revelation and self-expression that best accounts for why it became so highly esteemed. A brief consideration of how calligraphic technique is mastered might shed some light on the question of why such expressive potential was seen as intrinsic to calligraphy in the first place.

As discussed elsewhere, the Chinese written script is made up of several thousand individual graphs. Each consists of an invariable group of strokes executed in a set order. One of the truly unique features of calligraphy that results from these apparently restrictive guidelines is that the viewer is able to mentally retrace, stroke by stroke, the exact steps by which the work was made. The viewer also is able to observe extremely subtle nuances of execution—where a stroke was made swiftly or slowly, whether the brush was put to the paper with great delicacy or force, and so on.

The ability to perform this retracing personalizes the viewing experience and generates in the viewer the sense of interacting or communing with the absent calligrapher. At the same time it is precisely the nuances of execution, those individualized deviations from the set form, that separate good calligraphy from bad handwriting. Furthermore, since everyone who is taught to read and write learns the same basic procedures, often by literally tracing famous examples of calligraphy, every educated person is to a significant extent able to perceive and appreciate the achievements of a great calligrapher.

The evaluation of calligraphy thus clearly had an obvious social dimension, but it also had an important natural dimension that should not be overlooked. For example, early critics and connoisseurs often likened its expressive power to elements of the natural world, comparing the movement of the brush to the force of a boulder plummeting down a hillside or to the gracefulness of the fleeting patterns left on the surface of a pond by swimming geese. Writing also would frequently be described in physiological terms that invoked the "bones," "muscles," and "flesh" of a line. In short, while calligraphy involves the Confucian emphasis on the social, this cannot be separated from a more Daoist emphasis on the workings of nature.

Although the practice and appreciation of calligraphy are often presented as essentially traditional pursuits, calligraphy is present in modern China in various ways. Indeed, the single most commonly reproduced example of cal-

ligraphy is undoubtedly the four character phrase (*Renmin Ribao,* "The People's Daily") that to this day appears on the masthead of every copy of the official newspaper of the PRC—four characters originally brushed by Chairman Mao himself. Also, as several recent exhibitions of modern Chinese art have demonstrated, many contemporary avant-garde artists continue to engage and question the cultural authority associated with the "beautiful writing" of the past two thousand years.

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**Suggested further readings:**

Billeter, Jean François. *The Chinese Art of Writing.* New York: Skira/Rizzoli, 1990.

Harrist, Robert, and Wen Fong. *The Embodied Image: Chinese Calligraphy from the John B. Elliott Collection.* Princeton: Art Museum, Princeton University in association with Harry N. Abrams, 1999.

Kraus, Richard Curt. *Brushes with Power: Modern Politics and the Chinese Art of Calligraphy.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.

Sullivan, Michael. *The Three Perfections: Chinese Painting, Poetry, and Calligraphy.* Rev. ed. New York: George Braziller, 1999.

Yee, Chiang. *Chinese Calligraphy: An Introduction to Its Aesthetics and Technique.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973.

# Activity 5.1 Expressing the Self Through Word and Image

**Performance Objectives** Students will read and analyze poems, paying special attention to the use of imagery, and then create their own poems and corresponding images in handscroll format.

**Grade Level** 6–12

**Variation Grade Level** 3–5

**Essential Questions**
What are some themes of Tang poetry?
How is imagery used in Chinese poetry?
What is the relationship between word and image in Chinese poetry and painting?
How can poetic and artistic imagery be characterized as universal, culturally specific, or personal?

**Standards**

**Social Studies**

*World History*

- Knowing the social and economic characteristics, such as customs, traditions, child-rearing practices, ways of making a living, education and socialization practices, gender roles, roots, and religious and spiritual beliefs, that distinguish cultures and civilizations
- Viewing history through the eyes of those who witnessed key events and developments by analyzing their literature, diary accounts, letters, artifacts, art, music, architectural drawings, and other documents

**Language Arts**

*Language for Literary Response and Expression*

- Selecting texts and performances from a wide range of authors, subjects, and genres, including poetry
- Reading literary works set in different periods and places and using appropriate written forms, such as essays or reviews, to explore the connections between them and aspects of human experience, including those that are common and those that are culturally distinct

*Language for Critical Analysis and Evaluation*
- Assessing the content and presentation of written and oral texts using criteria drawn from elements specific to a genre, from knowledge of the subject matter and purpose, and from personal perspectives
- Comparing and contrasting different literary styles

**Time Required** One class period to analyze and write poems; two additional classes to complete handscrolls and present final products

**Materials**
Copies of the **Use of Imagery in Tang Poems** handout
Copies of the **Sources of Chinese Art** handout
Wooden dowels (5/16 x 10 in.), two for each handscroll
Strips of white paper; cutting 11 x 14 in. sheets of watercolor sheets in half, horizontally, works well
Wallpaper remnants or sturdy wrapping paper, cut into approximately 9 x 21 in. pieces for border
Glue
Watercolor
Paintbrushes
Water in containers
Paper towels
Embroidery floss cut into 6 in. lengths and knotted at one end

**Assessment Piece** Poem; handscrolls

**Procedure**
**1.** Read the poems in the **Use of Imagery in Tang Poems** handout with students and discuss the following:
These poems were all written in the Tang dynasty (618–907 C.E.). What are the themes of each poem? (Wang Wei reflects upon solitude and the celebration of nature; Li Bo's work is a fantasy piece that focuses on people; and Du Fu is making a social comment.)
Consider what might be lost through translation of the poems (rhythm, rhyme, consonance, depth of meaning of particular words).
Consider what might be translated but still not fully understood for someone unfamiliar with Chinese culture (e.g., imagery that may allude to Chinese myths, stories, historical figures, and places).
**2.** Have students choose one of the excerpts to use as a model for writing their own short poems, considering theme but creating or using imagery that is relevant to their own time and culture.
**3.** Have students make a horizontal handscroll that incorporates their poem

with their writing style and art. Remind them that in traditional Chinese art, poetry, painting, and calligraphy complemented one another in a handscroll—the figures, form, and words acted as a whole in creating a sense of harmony. Have them study examples of Chinese handscroll paintings as found in museum Web sites or books and ask them the following:
Note the sense of balance—the use of empty space as well as form in the paintings.
Consider the way individuals are depicted—size in relation to surroundings is especially important.
Are the natural landscapes depicted to scale? A literal representation is not as important as the impression it creates.
Where do you find calligraphy on the handscroll? Have other people added to the writing on the painting, recording impressions, comments, or reflections about the painting?
What subjects are shown in the handscrolls? Do you find certain images and themes frequently represented? What images and themes might students use to enable their classmates to understand the painting that they will create?

**4.** Set up art materials for students, including paper, watercolor, paintbrushes, water, and paper towels. To set the proper mood, consider taking a few minutes for students to practice sitting upright, breathing deeply with eyes closed to clear the mind and prepare for work. This fosters the meditative state that artists strive to incorporate in their undertakings and has the effect of calming and focusing students.

**5.** Have students begin by copying their poem on the right side of the handscroll. This will provide a constant reminder of the poem's themes and images, as well as guarantee room for the placement and balance of images.

**6.** Have students complete their watercolor paintings. Allow paintings to dry, weighting the ends of the paper to lie flat.

**7.** Use wallpaper remnants, or wrapping paper, to create frames for the pictures. Adding a 2 in. border around the painting is effective, leaving additional length for dowels. (This translates to a 9 1/2 x 20 in. sheet.) Center the painting on the border and mark corners with pencil for placement. Remove painting, apply glue along the border, and reset painting, aligning to the corner marks.

**8.** Fold one half inch of each end of the border back (away from the painting) and insert the dowel. Insert unknotted end of floss on the right side, so that it extends horizontally away from the handscroll, and glue along length of border.

**9.** Gently roll the handscrolls from left to right. Wind floss around handscrolls, tucking the knotted ends through to hold them closed.

**10.** Either in small groups, or as a class, have students present handscrolls and poems. Discuss the use of imagery in the poems and paintings and ask students the following questions:
How do they complement one another?
Which images in the poems and paintings are universal, readily understandable to anyone? Which are understandable only to someone versed in the same culture as the poet-artist? Which images are personal and have a certain meaning to the poet-artist and different meanings for others?

**Extension** Have students bring in lyrics to one of their favorite songs and analyze the use of imagery, identifying the universal, the culturally specific, and the personal.

**Variation for Grades 3–5** Have students concentrate on making handscrolls. Explain that handscrolls relate a narrative. Much like a comic strip, in a handscroll the narrative is rendered in individual scenes. The reader unrolls the handscroll one scene at a time, pausing to examine each. Rather than drawing boxes around each scene, Chinese artists used vertical objects, such as a tree or screen, to distinguish scenes. Referring to the steps above, ask students to create a narrative handscroll. It can be an account of their day or a story they have read.

# Handout Use of Imagery in Tang (618–907 C.E.) Poems

I sit alone in the dark bamboo grove,
Playing the zither and whistling long.
In this deep wood no one would know—
Only bright moon comes to shine.
–Wang Wei (701–761 C.E.)

Silk that was bestowed at the vermilion court
Came originally from some poor shivering women;
Their husbands were whipped and flogged
So that it could be levied as a tribute to the imperial city.

Inside the vermilion gate wine and meat are stinking:
On the roadside lie the bones of people frozen to death.
–Du Fu (712–776 C.E.)

From a swift horse prancing proudly through fallen petals,
He brushes his whip against a cloud-covered chariot.
A lovely woman, smiling, raises the pearl curtain—
"My home is there," she says pointing off at a red tower.
–Li Bo (701–762 C.E.)

**Chinese Painting and Poetry**

The history of Chinese art is very dynamic, but there are consistent trends as well. In traditional Chinese art, poetry, painting, and calligraphy complemented one another in a handscroll—the figures, form, and words acted as a whole in creating a sense of harmony. Have students study examples of Chinese handscroll paintings as found in museum Web sites or books and ask them the following:

Note the sense of balance—the use of empty space as well as form in the paintings.

Consider the way individuals are depicted—size in relation to surroundings is especially important.

Are the natural landscapes depicted to scale? A literal representation is not as

important as the impression it creates.

Where do you find calligraphy on the handscroll? Have other people added to the writing on the painting, recording impressions, comments, or reflections about the painting?

What subjects are shown in the handscrolls? Do you find certain images and themes frequently represented? What images and themes might you use to enable your classmates to understand the painting that you will create?

# Handout Sources of Chinese Art

**Print Sources**

*China, 5000 Years: Innovation and Transformation in the Arts.* Selected by Sherman Lee. New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1998. (Many images that are not available on the Web site are in this book.)

Clunas, Craig. *Art in China.* Oxford History of Art. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Rawson, Jessica, et al. *The British Museum Book of Chinese Art.* Edited by Jessica Rawson. London: British Museum Press, 1992.

Silbergeld, Jerome. *Chinese Painting Style: Media, Methods, and Principles of Form.* Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982.

Sullivan, Michael. *The Arts of China.* Revised edition. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977.

**Selected Chinese Paintings on the Internet**

*Night-Shining White*
Attributed to Han Gan (Chinese, active 742–56)
Tang dynasty (618–960)
Handscroll; ink on paper
http://www.metmuseum.org/collections/view1.asp?dep=6&full=0&item=1977%2E78

*Five-Colored Parakeet on Blossoming Apricot Tree*
Attributed to Emperor Huizong (reigned 1101–1125, died 1135)
Song dynasty (960–1279)
Handscroll; ink and color on silk
http://www.boston.com/mfa/chinese/parakeet.htm

*Pure and Remote Mountains and Streams*
Xia Gui (active ca. 1195–1224)
Song dynasty (960–1279)
Handscroll; ink and color on silk
http://www.npm.gov.tw/destore/dp00045.htm

*Autumn Colors on the Ch'iao and Hua Mountains*
Zhao Mengfu (1254–1322)
Yuan dynasty (1279–1368)
Handscroll; ink and color on paper
http://www.npm.gov.tw/destore/dp00025.htm

*Dwelling in the Fu-ch'un Mountains*
Huang Kongwang (1268–1354)
Yuan dynasty (1279–1368)
Handscroll; ink on paper
http://www.npm.gov.tw/destore/dp00026.htm

# Activity 5.2 The Expressive Brush

**Performance Objectives** Students will express emotion using brushstrokes, demonstrating that ideas can be communicated through style as well as subject matter. This activity offers students the experience of working with the tools of Chinese calligraphy and exploring visual effects made by brush and ink.

**Grade Level** 6–12

**Variation Grade Level** 3–5

**Essential Questions**
How did educated Chinese study calligraphy?
How is Chinese calligraphy expressive?
What is the role of the dynamic line in calligraphy?

**Standards**

**Social Studies**

*World History*

- Knowing the social and economic characteristics, such as customs, traditions, child-rearing practices, ways of making a living, education and socialization practices, gender roles, roots, and religious and spiritual beliefs, that distinguish cultures and civilizations
- Knowing important historic events and developments of past civilizations
- Viewing history through the eyes of those who witnessed key events and developments by analyzing their literature, diary accounts, letters, artifacts, art, music, architectural drawings, and other documents

**Language Arts**

*Language for Information and Understanding*

- Following directions that involve a series of actions
- Using discussion to explore complex concepts and ideas, clarifying the use of comparisons, analogies, and the elaboration of ideas

**Visual Arts**

- Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes
- Selecting analyzing and reflecting on effectiveness of chosen media, techniques and processes; taking advantage of the qualities of techniques, and processes to enhance communication of experiences and ideas
- Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures

**Time Required** One class period for art activity, one for reviewing logos or advertising

**Materials** Photocopies of the ***Manual of Paintings by Masters of the Successive Periods*** **and Introductory Questions** from the beginning of this section or the ***Visible Traces*** poster
Paintbrushes for each student (standard camel hair, round, no. 12, works well)
Black ink (at least one container for every two students)
Water (one container for rinsing brushes for every two students)
Paper towels for cleanup
Paper (newsprint or watercolor)

**Assessment Piece** Brush paintings, student reflections

**Procedure**

**1.** Arrange art materials for students.

**2.** Allow students a few minutes to practice the different ways the ink and brush can be used to produce a variety of strokes, especially in terms of pressure on the brush, length or direction of strokes, amount of ink on brush, or thickness of curves and lines. These techniques produce what is known as "dynamic line"—a prominent feature of Chinese calligraphy and painting.

**3.** Introduce the activity by briefly reviewing the role of calligraphy in Chinese culture (see background essay, "**Chinese Calligraphy,**" assigning the reading to older students if desired), emphasizing that before one could start to express oneself through calligraphy, one had to study the masters for years. This study was repetitive—copying famous examples of calligraphy over and over. Distribute and examine photocopies of the ***Manual of Paintings by Masters of the Successive Periods*** and discuss the **Introductory Questions**. Continue the dialogue with students by asking how this manual might have been used.

**4.** In order to foster students' appreciation of this kind of study, ask them to select a handwriting sample and practice executing several letters of the alphabet a number of times, very slowly, to try to replicate them. Explain that a Chinese scholar would have practiced in such a manner for years before developing his or her own expressive style.

**5.** Move on to the idea of expression, discussing with students what it means. Raise the question: How might dynamic line be expressive?

**6.** Have students fold a fresh piece of paper into eight sections (one fold from top to bottom and two from side to side). Open the paper.

**7.** Have students number the sections, starting at the top, proceeding from left to right. Explain that you will give them a word or phrase for each block on the paper. When the word is given, they will have two to three seconds

to make a visual impression of the word in a block.

**8.** Read the following words to the students at a steady pace—their first impulse will produce the best results:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Anger | 2. Peacefulness | 3. Joy | 4. Human energy |
| 5. Woman | 6. Depression | 7. Solitude | 8. Confusion |

Be certain that students are using the same block for their sketches (anger is in block 1, for example) for ease in comparing the results later.

**9.** Post the completed papers around the room. Have students compare their work. There will be many remarkable similarities among representations. For example, anger generates angles, hard lines, sharpness. Peacefulness is often expressed through long, horizontal lines, joy through upward motion, human energy through an explosion, woman through circles, depression through downward motion or something heavy bearing on something small. Solitude is frequently a small isolated point or line and confusion a jumbled image.[1]

Discuss the results and ask students the following questions:

What different techniques were used to communicate the feelings behind the words?

Can you suggest reasons that there are similarities?

How might this information be used by an artist when painting?

Could an artist communicate ideas through the style of painting as well as the subject matter?

**11.** Reexamine the ***Manual of Paintings by Masters of the Successive Periods.*** Ask students: How are the lines in the calligraphy dynamic? What do you think the person who wrote this might have been feeling?

## Extensions

Look at how writing styles are used in our culture, using advertising and logos as examples. For homework, have students collect samples of logos or advertisements that use particular styles of writing to promote a feeling or concept associated with their company or product. Boeing's logo, for example, is both strong and slanted, giving a sense of stability and movement. Have students present their samples, offering an analysis of the qualities suggested by the style of writing.

Have students write a poem from the activity **Expressing the Self Through Word and Image** in a style that evokes the image they are projecting to

1. This concept is borrowed from: Betty Edwards. *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain: A Course in Enhancing Creativity and Artistic Confidence.* Los Angeles: J.P. Tarcher; 1979.

their audience.

Younger students may write their names in a style that evokes qualities they associate with themselves. Have them write two to three sentences explaining what their style is intended to evoke.

**Variation for Grades 3–5** Have each student wear a smock to protect their clothing. Instead of black ink use watercolors that will wash off the skin easily. Cover desks with newspaper or recycled paper.

Asia Society

Founded in 1956, the Asia Society is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, public education organization dedicated to deepening American understanding of Asia and fostering communication between Americans and Asians.

To assist you in teaching about Asia, the Asia Society offers the following programs:

**AskAsia <www.askasia.org>:** An educational Web site for teachers and students and the winner of fifteen top education-industry awards. The site features downloadable lesson plans, readings, art exchanges, and much more. Through AskAsia, students and teachers are able to join a virtual community, sharing experiences, discovering new sources of materials and exchanging ideas with others around the world.

**AsiaInteractive:** From the new *Journeys Along the Silk Roads* prototype CD-ROM to the award-winning video series *Tune in Japan* and *Tune in Korea*, the Society produces a variety of innovative multimedia resources for use classrooms.

**TeachAsia:** This professional development program provides support to middle school educators through new information and methodologies for teaching about Asia plus ongoing support via a national electronic network of educators and scholars.

Major funding for AskAsia, AsiaInteractive, and TeachAsia has been provided by The Freeman Foundation, with additional support from Merrill Lynch and Co. Foundation, Inc. The Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership (CGP) also provided major funding for the development and implementation of TeachAsia. Others that have provided support for AskAsia have included the AT& T Foundation and the MCI Foundation.

Additionally, the Society's newly launched Asia in the Schools Web site <www.asiaintheschools.org> provides information about the Society's newly launched Asia in the Schools and its National Commission activities, made possible by the generous support of The Freeman Foundation.

The Society's new, dynamic portal site Asia Source <www.asiasource.org> is a gateway to all things Asian—from the arts, culture, religion, and society, to business, economics, policy, and government—with daily news bulletins, an international calendar of events, featured articles, annotated links, country profiles and other Asia-related items. The institutional Web site <www.AsiaSociety.org> has news about the Society, hosts information on the institutionís publications, departments, and activities, offers users a view of select Society exhibitions, and provides transcripts of major speeches from Asia Society policy and business events.

The Society's Cultural Programs divsion offers educational materials related to art exhibitions. These include school visits to exhibitions, teacher training materials, and teacher workshops to help educators integrate Asian art into their school curriculum.

Asia Society is headquartered at 725 Park Avenue, New York, New York, with regional centers in Houston; Los Angeles; Washington, D.C.; Hong Kong; and Melbourne, Australia. Representative offices are located in Seattle, San Francisco, Shanghai, and Manila.

To find out more about K–12 educational programs, materials, and initiatives, visit the Society on line at <www.AskAsia.org> or by using our toll-free hotlines 1-888-ASK-ASIA (1-888-275-2742) or 1-888-FAX-ASIA (1-888-329-2742), or by writing to the Education Division, Asia Society, 725 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10021.

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# The Queens Borough Public Library

The Queens Borough Public Library serves a book-hungry population of two million from 63 library locations plus 6 Adult Learning Centers. It circulates more books and other library materials than any other library system in the country, and is located in New York City's most ethnically diverse borough.

Established in 1995, the Queens Library Gallery is an adjunct to the Queens Borough Public Library, and is located in the Central Library 89–11 Merrick Boulevard, Jamaica. Exhibitions at the Queens Library Gallery explore a range of subjects that may combine history, art, literature, children's themes and ethnic culture, reflecting the diverse population and interests of Queens' communities. The Gallery is also committed to arts education for adults and children of all ages.

Services for children and teens are paramount at Queens Library. The Library offers after-school activities, homework help programs, Summer Reading Clubs, story-hour programs for all ages and Toddler Learning Centers. The Connecting Libraries and Schools Program (CLASP) serves students and educators in public, private and parochial schools, encouraging them to make greater use of the library's resources. The Queens Library Gallery offers weekly programs for children, tours for classrooms, teacher's resources, and a Teen Docent Program.

• Latchkey after-school programs at 35 library locations serve more than 122,000 children. An endowment provided by the Uris Brothers Foundation is a source of ongoing funding.

• Every Queens Library Children's Room computer workstation is equipped with KidsLinQ™, a special version of the Queens Library homepage. KidsLinQ guides youngsters to educational Internet web sites, homework help from reliable sources, and where to find books and articles for school assignments through special child-friendly search engines.

• Innovative programs for teens encouraged use of the library for more than homework. Activities included Open Mic Nights, video-teleconferenced poetry readings, and other teen-themed activities, such as College Fair Nights and Job Preparation Workshops.

• The Teen Docent Program offers motivated young adults the opportunity to gain work experience and explore career and educational opportunities in the arts. The program trains docents to give exhibition tours to children, peers, and adults. These responsibilities are supplemented by training sessions about art and its historical and cultural significance, meetings with special guests from the arts community, and visits to artist's studios, galleries and museums. The student also becomes acquainted with some of the roles that museums have in contemporary society.

For more information about Library programs, services, locations, events and news, visit the Queens Library Web site at <www.queenslibrary.org> or phone 718–990–0781.

In 1997, Gary E. Strong, Director of the Queens Library and Zhou He Ping, Deputy Director of the National Library of China, signed an exclusive agreement between their libraries. The agreement paved the way for *Visible Traces* and provided for the exchange of books, staff and other library materials.

For more information about exhibitions, educational programs and class visits at the Queens Library Gallery, please visit our Web site at <www.queenslibrary.org/gallery> or call 718–990–8665.

To order a *Visible Traces* exhibition catalog, please call Paragon Book Gallery at 1–800–552–6657.